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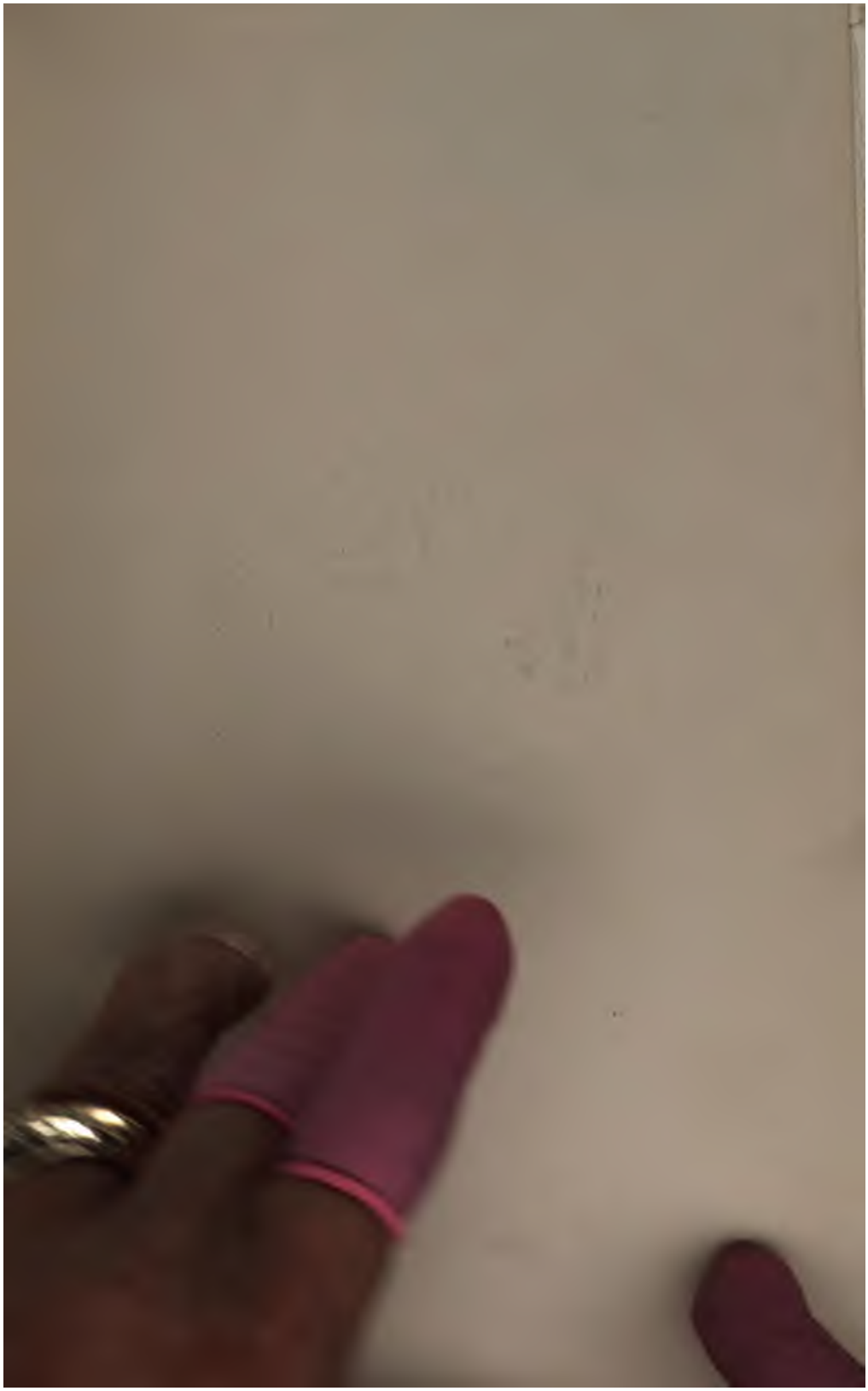

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship

Volume I

"Wilhelm still held that lovely hand"

Photogravure after the painting by C. Schweninger

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship

BY

J. W. von Goethe

Translated by

Thomas Carlyle

In Two Volumes

Volume I.

Edited by Nathan Haskell Dole

Boston Francis A. Niccolls & Company *Publishers*

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Introduction

GOETHE, in one of his letters written in response to a communication from a sentimental young countess, who wrote him anonymously regarding his "Werther," gives a contrasting picture of himself in two phases. The one is a carnival Goethe, in a laced coat and other consistent finery, illuminated by the unmeaning magnificence of sconces and chandelier, amidst all kinds of people, kept at the card-table by a pair of beautiful eyes, and in varying dissipation driven from party to concert and from concert to ball, and with all the fascination of frivolity paying court to a pretty Blondine: a sentimental Goethe, with affectedly gloomy deep feelings. The other is a wholesome German Goethe, in a gray beaver coat and boots, with brown silk cravat, eagerly detecting the breath of spring in the cool February air, and waiting for his dear wide world to open out once more. This Goethe, ever living, striving, and working in himself, seeks to express, according to his powers, sometimes the innocent feelings of youth in little poems, the strong spices of life in various dramas, the forms of his friends and his neighbourhood and his beloved household possessions with chalk on gray paper, never asking if any of his work is destined to last, for the reason that the very act of working makes him keep rising higher and higher, and he will leap at no ideal, but fight and play, leaving his feelings to develop of themselves.

On the one hand, he found pleasure in the gay coquetries of fashionable life; on the other, he declared that his greatest happiness was to live with the best men of his time. Goethe, when he wrote that, was in his twenty-sixth year. He had drunk deeply of the cup of life and had recognised the danger

of the enticements of Circean madness. He was ready for the great career which his good genius whispered to his inner consciousness was to open out before him. The pictures that he drew of his double self were eminently characteristic, but one can see at a glance which one he felt was the real portrait. The carnival Goethe was to be put away with other discarded trumperies of youth. It had served its purpose.

It may be supposed that all men's experiences and their environment go to form them; at all events, that would seem to be the mission of the discipline of life. But the material to be formed has to be possessed of some quality, else the fire burns it out, the stress breaks its fibres, the mould fails to leave any impress, the file spoils it. One cannot polish putty, or mould molasses, or twist wood, or refine granite.

Goethe superbly illustrates the man made by his circumstances; external conditions answering to the inherent qualities. He had all the chances of being ruined; they were offered him freely. A pedantic martinet of a father insisted that he should conform his talents to a preconceived course; gay and dissipated friends helped him to waste his energies; beautiful girls were dazzled by his manly beauty and his brilliant powers of entertaining; an easy-going code of morals prevailed in the circles in which he mingled; he was freed from the necessity of strenuous labour; a tendency to procrastination and the easy-going current of dilletantism conspired to make him grow bright leaves instead of fruit; a petty court for his home and a pleasure-loving duke for his patron might easily have undermined his independence.

But the stuff of the man was too genuine to be disintegrated by such destructive forces. He was subjected to them, but when he found them working against him he withdrew, as the wise man can, as only the fool will not. Late hours, overindulgence in unwholesome food and intoxicants, the more insidious vices of a university town, brought him face to face with the possibility of an early death. He learned his lesson in time, and became a model of abstemiousness and regularity. That is proved by the colossal amount of work

which he produced. The collected writings of Goethe, voluminous as they are, fail of completeness. It is reckoned that he penned no less than ten thousand letters, and most of them were of the detailed length which a high postal rate always imposed a century ago, and not a few in doggerel rhyme or more serious verse. Multitudes of magazine articles and reviews of every kind, hundreds and hundreds of poems and songs, dozens of comedies and plays, proceeded from that indefatigable worker. Moreover, he was deeply interested in scientific researches, several of which resulted in discoveries of permanent value; he had general and autocratic disposition of the stage in Weimar; his participation in the councils of the duke was no less real and time-consuming because the duchy was but small. He learned the value of time and shared it wisely with those who also knew its value and his.

Napoleon's laconic comment, "Voilà un homme!" sums up Goethe. The titles and the much-worshipped German particle "von" which beckoned to him like that morning star which he early chose for his armorial designation now seem insignificant and petty. It is Goethe, just as it is Shakespeare and Æschylus and Homer.

Yet he was the product of his age and of his country. The air he breathed and the food he ate no more made his brain and brawn, than the ideas which were then in vogue made his mind. He was fortunate in being the pioneer in an era. All the pioneers of eras are fortunate, for they help to make their native literature and art and science and politics. They set the key for the symphony that is to come. Still more fortunate are the pioneers when they are also men of commanding genius: the Palestrinas, the Bachs, the Beethovens, the Homers, the Shakespeares, the Marlowes, the Goethes.

At the same time, they have all the disadvantages of pioneers, — the uncertainty of their direction, the perils of the unknown, the likelihood of being misunderstood or not believed.

There was Goethe, the many-sided, in peril of being made the mere impresario of a puppet-show for a picayune Ger-

man court. There is nothing in Goethe's life finer than his awakening to the fact that he had a broader mission than that of a mere purveyor of amusements. It was after his two years' absence in Italy. He came back to Weimar in 1788, and his friends found him strangely altered, with his head high above the petty interests of the cliquey town. He was again fortunate in having a patron of generous instincts. Duke Karl August, with whom, only a few years before, Goethe had been ready to enter into the most extravagant revelries, was quick to recognise the intellectual superiority of his privy councillor, and granted him the freedom he craved.

But Germany at that time was only a parcel of jealous and insignificant principalities, loosely threaded together on the string of a common language. Goethe often mourned that he had not the broad-minded and unified public that he would have had in England. It was to his glory that, by his greatness, he was to help unify scattered Germany, for the sense of possession of such a man is a powerful concentrating influence.

In one of Goethe's letters to Friederike Oeser, whose father was director of the Academy of Design at Leipsic, there is a passage which casts a suggestive light on Goethe's character and development. It was written when he was twenty. He says:

"My present existence is devoted to philosophy. Locked in, solitary, paper and ink, pens, and a couple of books, form all my apparatus. And by this simple road I arrive at a knowledge of truth often as far as others, or even farther, with their library knowledge. A great scholar is seldom a great philosopher; and he who, with much labour, has thumbed the pages of many books, despises the easy, simple book of nature; and yet nothing is true but what is simple, certainly a poor recommendation for true wisdom. Let him who follows the simple path go on his way in silence; humility and prudence become our footsteps on this path, all of which will eventually meet with due reward."

This shows that he had the true scientific spirit. It ac-

companied him through life, and enabled him by the aid of his imagination to make his discoveries relating to the morphology of plants and animals which, in a way, anticipated the theories of Darwin. At the same time, the contempt which he even here shows for "library knowledge" and merely academic diplomas, grew into its corollary, a distrust of other scientific men. Such stalwart independence, when misdirected, leads often to error; hence it was that Goethe's famous theory of colour, supported as it was by very plausible arguments, but based on false premises, was the result of his working by himself, satisfied with his notion that truth is simple, and the road to it straight and narrow. Though never accepted by the scientific men of his day, and now known to be fallacious, the Farbenlehre and the lesson of his advocacy of it are just as instructive as if it, like his new theories in osteology and botany, had been sound.

His early bent toward scientific study took the same general direction; it was led along the same path of which he makes mention in the letter to Friederike Oeser. Her father, A. F. Oeser, of whom he took lessons in drawing and painting, had taught him to find beauty in simplicity and directness.

Before he was fifteen, his acquaintance with a painter who applied his art to the manufacture of oilcloth brought about a practical familiarity with the process. When he was about the same age he got interested in the manufacture of jewelry, and acquired a considerable knowledge of precious stones. He had the acquisitive faculty largely developed, and his precocity made him a welcome companion to his elders.

He would gladly have been an artist, but his genius forbade that. He failed in the ability to express himself in terms of colour, but his art studies and his assiduous practice in Italy had their effect on his development. "Every man is led and misled in a way peculiar to himself," said Goethe, and his whole career is illustrative of that commonplace. Given the soil and the seeds, the garden is certain to produce something.

Goethe had the dramatic gift, and very early began to

display it. He tells in his autobiography how he used to delight his old friend Von Olenschleger by graphically, and often through mimicry, depicting the characters and circumstances of the Middle Ages which the historian has related only as a matter of course. The French occupation of Frankfort, when Goethe was a boy of ten, had already turned his attention to the stage. A French theatre was established, and he, as the grandson of the mayor, had a free ticket, which he seems to have used without restraint. He scraped acquaintance with the actors, learned to speak excellent French, by playing with their children, and became familiar with the whole range of the French drama, classic and popular. It was characteristic of him to fall to imitating the French forms; he wrote a little piece for the stage, of which he afterward remembered only that the scene was rural, and that there was no lack in it of kings' daughters, princes, or gods. He took it to a youth connected with the theatre, and had to learn his first lesson in the classic dramatic liturgy. It was an instructive lesson, for it taught the boy to think for himself. He listened to what his friend Derones told him about the three unities of Aristotle, the regularity of the French drama, the harmony of the verse, the probability of the action, and then, after reinforcing it by reading Corneille's "Treatise on the Three Unities," and devouring the whole of Racine, Molière, and a large part of Corneille, he came to the conclusion that the dramatic freedom of the English drama was far preferable to the artificial scheme of the French. It was not strange that one who as a child had begun by imitating Terence, who before he was eleven had got such an understanding of the three greatest dramatists of France, should become the manager of theatrical affairs for his sovereign, and should produce masterpieces that have held the stage for a century.

Goethe's simple apparatus and reliance on nature for his philosophical researches find their counterpart in his literary work. Only as a child he imitated; though, of course, his acting dramas had to be constructed on familiar lines, he

was quick to seize on the occurrences of real life. His absurdly capricious relations with the young girl whom he called Annchen became the basis of his earliest dramatic writing, "The Lover's Caprice." His self-tormenting penance at having caused sorrow and disappointment to Frederica, the daughter of the pastor of Sesenheim, was worked into his plays of "Götz von Berlichingen" and "Clavigo;" his "Sorrows of the Young Werther" were his own sorrows, because Charlotte Buff loved J. C. Kestner. He portrayed his irregular life at Leipsic in one scene in "Faust." He had the power of coining experiences into literature. He himself said to Eckermann, "I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced, and which has not urged me to production."

Though he so quickly seized upon the popular current of sentimentalism to float his romantic productions, his really sound and wholesome nature revolted against the overstrained and artificial. As a reaction against "Werther" he composed "Reinecke Fuchs." The permanent value of "Faust" lies in its wonderful union of realism with mediæval supernaturalism. The pathetic and exquisite story of Gretchen was suggested by his first love; his friend Fräulein von Klettenberg's alchemistic vagaries took him back into the Middle Ages. His creative imagination embraced many epochs and many countries, but this imagination required a basis of practical knowledge. His acquaintance with other languages was phenomenal, he wrote poems in French, English, Italian, and Latin. As a boy he was not satisfied until he read the Bible in Hebrew. As old man his interest in Oriental poetry tempted him to study Persian, Arabic, and Sanscrit. He had a good knowledge of modern Greek. He took pleasure in etching, engraving, and painting, and this experimental facility stood him in good stead in his official capacity when he was called upon to criticise and select works of art for the ducal galleries.

And, with all this many-sided productiveness, with all the reverence and worship which he inspired, Goethe preserved

to a high degree, and to an advanced old age, a calm serenity and imperturbability, a gracious consciousness of his dignity as a man, and a noble humility and freedom from conceit. This is shown in his autobiography, in his letters, and in the reports of those that knew him. He was not free from faults, but, taken all in all, he was as admirable a type of a man as Germany or any other country ever produced. His works have the universal quality that commends them to readers of every nationality. Even when transferred to another language with consequent loss, — as must be the case with the lyric productions especially, — they still preserve the characteristic beauty of thought and flavour of originality which still hold them as the classics of Germany. Even though the sentimentality of "Werther" and the "Elective Affinities" is of a flavour that does not appeal to our day, we recognise it as an interesting phenomenon of an epoch past, and under it we see the genuine heart of humanity beating. In "Prometheus," in "Faust," in "Egmont," in "Tasso," in "Iphigenia," no qualifications are needed. They are built on the eternal rocks, and endowed with all the eternal elements of beauty. This is true of a large part of Goethe's literary remains. We should be much poorer were "Dichtung und Wahrheit" stricken out of existence. It is a unique autobiography; the life history of a poet tinged with the sunny gleams of a tempered imagination. The lyric poems also are wonderful gems of brilliancy, perfect in form and full of undying grace.

Thus it is that there is no danger of Goethe's ever losing his position of supremacy as one of the greatest writers of the world, and each new edition of his works translated into English presents some new phase of his wonderful activity, since from the almost inexhaustible stores of the original the selecting hand has only to take some work hitherto unknown.

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

To the Reader

THESE two translations, "Meister's Apprenticeship" and "Meister's Travels," have long been out of print, but never altogether out of demand; nay, it would seem, the originally somewhat moderate demand has gone on increasing, and continues to increase. They are, therefore, here republished; and the one being in some sort a sequel to the other, though in rather unexpected sort, they are now printed together. The English version of "Meister's Travels" has been extracted, or extricated, from a compilation of very various quality named "German Romance," and placed by the side of the "Apprenticeship," its forerunner, which, in the translated as in the original state, appeared hitherto as a separate work.

In the "Apprenticeship," the first of these translations, which was executed some fifteen years ago, under questionable auspices, I have made many little changes, but could not, unfortunately, change it into a right translation: it hung, in many places, stiff and laboured, too like some unfortunate buckram cloak round the light, harmonious movement of the original, — and, alas! still hangs so, here and there, and may now hang. In the second translation, "Meister's Travels," two years later in date, I have changed little or nothing. I might have added much; for the original, since that time, was, as it were, taken to pieces by the author himself in his last years, and constructed anew, and, in the final edition of his works, appears with multifarious intercalations, giving a great expansion,

both of size and of scope. Not pedagogy only, and husbandry and art and religion and human conduct in the nineteenth century, but geology, astronomy, cotton-spinning, metallurgy, anatomical lecturing, and much else, are typically shadowed forth in this second form of the "Travels," which, however, continues a fragment like the first, significantly pointing on all hands toward infinitude, — not more complete than the first was, or indeed perhaps less so. It will well reward the trustful student of Goethe to read this new form of the "Travels," and see how in that great mind, beaming in mildest mellow splendour, beaming if also trembling, like a great sun on the verge of the horizon, near now to its long farewell, all these things were illuminated and illustrated: but, for the mere English reader, there are probably in our prior edition of the "Travels" already novelties enough; for us, at all events, it seemed unadvisable to meddle with it further at present.

Goethe's position toward the English public is greatly altered since these translations first made their appearance. Criticisms near the mark, or farther from the mark, or even altogether far and away from any mark, — of these there have been enough. These pass on their road: the man and his works remain what they are and were, — more and more recognisable for what they are. Few English readers can require now to be apprised that these two books, named novels, come not under the Minerva-Press category, nor the Ballantyne-Press category, nor any such category; that the author is one whose secret, by no means worn upon his sleeve, will never, by any ingenuity, be got at in that way.

For a translator, in the present case, it is enough to reflect, that he who imports into his own country any true delineation, a rationally spoken word on any subject, has done well. Ours is a wide world, peaceably admitting many different modes of speech. In our wide world, there is but one altogether fatal person-

age, — the dunce, — he that speaks *ir*rationally, that sees not, and yet thinks he sees. A genuine seer and speaker, under what conditions soever, shall be welcome to us: has he not *seen* somewhat of great Nature our common mother's bringing forth, — seen it, loved it, laid his heart open to it and to the mother of it, so that he can now rationally speak it for us? He is our brother, and a good, not a bad, man: his words are like gold, precious, whether stamped in our mint, or in what mint soever stamped.

T. CARLYLE.

London, November, 1839.

Translator's Preface

To the First Edition of Meister's Apprenticeship

WHETHER it be that the quantity of genius among ourselves and the French, and the number of works more lasting than brass produced by it, have of late been so considerable as to make us independent of additional supplies; or that, in our ancient aristocracy of intellect, we disdain to be assisted by the Germans, whom, by a species of second sight, we have discovered, before knowing anything about them, to be a tumid, dreaming, extravagant, insane race of mortals, — certain it is, that hitherto our literary intercourse with that nation has been very slight and precarious. After a brief period of not too judicious cordiality, the acquaintance on our part was altogether dropped: nor, in the few years since we partially resumed it, have our feelings of affection or esteem been materially increased. Our translators are unfortunate in their selection or execution, or the public is tasteless and absurd in its demands; for, with scarcely more than one or two exceptions, the best works of Germany have lain neglected, or worse than neglected: and the Germans are yet utterly unknown to us. Kotzebue still lives in our minds as the representative of a nation that despises him; Schiller is chiefly known to us by the monstrous production of his boyhood; and Klopstock by a hacked and mangled image of his "Messiah," in which a beautiful poem is distorted into a theosophic rhapsody, and the brother of Virgil and Racine ranks

little higher than the author of "Meditations among the Tombs."

But of all these people there is none that has been more unjustly dealt with than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. For half a century the admiration — we might almost say the idol — of his countrymen, to us he is still a stranger. His name, long echoed and re-echoed through reviews and magazines, has become familiar to our ears; but it is a sound and nothing more: it excites no definite idea in almost any mind. To such as know him by the faint and garbled version of his "Werther," Goethe figures as a sort of poetic Heraclitus; some woebegone hypochondriac, whose eyes are overflowing with perpetual tears, whose long life has been spent in melting into ecstasy at the sight of waterfalls and clouds, and the moral sublime, or dissolving into hysterical wailings over hapless love-stories, and the miseries of human life. They are not aware that Goethe smiles at this performance of his youth, or that the German Werther, with all his faults, is a very different person from his English namesake; that his Sorrows are in the original recorded in a tone of strength and sarcastic emphasis, of which the other offers no vestige, and intermingled with touches of powerful thought, glimpses of a philosophy deep as it is bitter, which our sagacious translator has seen proper wholly to omit. Others, again, who have fallen in with Retsch's "Outlines" and the extracts from "Faust," consider Goethe as a wild mystic, a dealer in demonology and osteology, who draws attention by the aid of skeletons and evil spirits, whose excellence it is to be extravagant, whose chief aim it is to do what no one but himself has tried. The tyro in German may tell us that the charm of "Faust" is altogether unconnected with its preternatural import; that the work delineates the fate of human enthusiasm struggling against doubts and errors from within, against

skepticism, contempt, and selfishness from without; and that the witchcraft and magic, intended merely as a shadowy frame for so complex and mysterious a picture of the moral world and the human soul, are introduced for the purpose, not so much of being trembled at as laughed at. The voice of the tyro is not listened to; our indolence takes part with our ignorance; "Faust" continues to be called a monster; and Goethe is regarded as a man of "some genius," which he has perverted to produce all manner of misfashioned prodigies, — things false, abortive, formless, Gorgons and hydras, and chimeras dire.

Now, it must no doubt be granted, that, so long as our invaluable constitution is preserved in its pristine purity, the British nation may exist in a state of comparative prosperity with very inadequate ideas of Goethe; but, at the same time, the present arrangement is an evil in its kind, — slight, it is true, and easy to be borne, yet still more easy to be remedied, and which, therefore, ought to have been remedied ere now. Minds like Goethe's are the common property of all nations; and, for many reasons, all should have correct impressions of them.

It is partly with the view of doing something to supply this want, that "Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre" is now presented to the English public. Written in its author's forty-fifth year, embracing hints or disquisitions on almost every leading point in life and literature, it affords us a more distinct view of his matured genius, his manner of thought, and favourite subjects, than any of his other works. Nor is it Goethe alone whom it portrays: the prevailing taste of Germany is likewise indicated by it. Since the year 1795, when it first appeared at Berlin, numerous editions of "Meister" have been printed; critics of all ranks, and some of them dissenting widely from its doctrines, have loaded it with encomiums; its songs and poems are

familiar to every German ear; the people read it, and speak of it, with an admiration approaching in many cases to enthusiasm.

That it will be equally successful in England, I am far indeed from anticipating. Apart from the above considerations, — from the curiosity, intelligent or idle, which it may awaken, — the number of admiring, or even approving, judges it will find can scarcely fail of being very limited. To the great mass of readers, who read to drive away the tedium of mental vacancy, employing the crude phantasmagoria of a modern novel, as their grandfathers employed tobacco and diluted brandy, "Wilhelm Meister" will appear beyond endurance weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable. Those, in particular, who take delight in "King Cambyses' vein," and open "Meister" with the thought of "Werther" in their minds, will soon pause in utter dismay; and their paroxysm of dismay will pass by degrees into unspeakable contempt. Of romance interest there is next to none in "Meister;" the characters are samples to judge of, rather than persons to love or hate; the incidents are contrived for other objects than moving or affrighting us; the hero is a milksop, whom, with all his gifts, it takes an effort to avoid despising. The author himself, far from "doing it in a passion," wears a face of the most still indifference throughout the whole affair: often it is even wrinkled by a slight sardonic grin. For the friends of the sublime, then, — for those who cannot do without heroical sentiments, and "moving accidents by flood and field," — there is nothing here that can be of any service.

Nor among readers of a far higher character, can it be expected that many will take the praiseworthy pains of Germans, reverential of their favourite author, and anxious to hunt out his most elusive charms. Few among us will disturb themselves about the

allegories and typical allusions of the work; will stop to inquire whether it includes a remote emblem of human culture, or includes no such matter; whether this is a light, airy sketch of the development of man in all his endowments and faculties, gradually proceeding from the first rude exhibitions of puppets and mountebanks, through the perfection of poetic and dramatic art, up to the unfolding of the principle of religion, and the greatest of all arts, — the art of life, — or is nothing more than a bungled piece of patchwork, presenting in the shape of a novel much that should have been suppressed entirely, or at least given out by way of lecture. Whether the characters do or do not represent distinct classes of men, including various stages of human nature, from the gay, material vivacity of Philina to the severe moral grandeur of the uncle and the splendid accomplishment of Lothario, will to most of us be of small importance; and the everlasting disquisitions about plays and players, and politeness and activity, and art and nature, will weary many a mind that knows not and heeds not whether they are true or false. Yet every man's judgment is, in this free country, a lamp to himself: whoever is displeased will censure; and many, it is to be feared, will insist on judging "Meister" by the common rule, and, what is worse, condemning it, let Schlegel bawl as loudly as he pleases. "To judge," says he, "of this book, — new and peculiar as it is, and only to be understood and learned from itself, by our common notion of the novel, a notion pieced together and produced out of custom and belief, out of accidental and arbitrary requisitions, — is as if a child should grasp at the moon and stars, and insist on packing them into its toy-box."[1] Unhappily the most of us have boxes, and some of them are very small.

[1] Charakteristik des Meister.

Yet, independently of these its more recondite and dubious qualities, there are beauties in "Meister" which cannot but secure it some degree of favour at the hands of many. The philosophical discussions it contains; its keen glances into life and art; the minute and skilful delineation of men; the lively, genuine exhibition of the scenes they move in; the occasional touches of eloquence and tenderness, and even of poetry, the very essence of poetry; the quantity of thought and knowledge embodied in a style so rich in general felicities, of which, at least, the new and sometimes exquisitely happy metaphors have been preserved, — cannot wholly escape an observing reader, even on the most cursory perusal. To those who have formed for themselves a picture of the world, who have drawn out, from the thousand variable circumstances of their being, a philosophy of life, it will be interesting and instructive to see how man and his concerns are represented in the first of European minds: to those who have penetrated to the limits of their own conceptions, and wrestled with thoughts and feelings too high for them, it will be pleasing and profitable to see the horizon of their certainties widened, or at least separated with a firmer line from the impalpable obscure which surrounds it on every side. Such persons I can fearlessly invite to study "Meister." Across the disfigurement of a translation, they will not fail to discern indubitable traces of the greatest genius in our times. And the longer they study, they are likely to discern them the more distinctly. New charms will successively arise to view; and of the many apparent blemishes, while a few superficial ones may be confirmed, the greater and more important part will vanish, or even change from dark to bright. For, if I mistake not, it is with "Meister" as with every work of real and abiding excellence, — the first glance is the least favourable.

A picture of Raphael, a Greek statue, a play of Sophocles or Shakespeare, appears insignificant to the unpractised eye; and not till after long and patient and intense examination, do we begin to descry the earnest features of that beauty, which has its foundation in the deepest nature of man, and will continue to be pleasing through all ages.

If this appear excessive praise, as applied in any sense to "Meister," the curious skeptic is desired to read and weigh the whole performance, with all its references, relations, purposes, and to pronounce his verdict after he has clearly seized and appreciated them all. Or, if a more faint conviction will suffice, let him turn to the picture of Wilhelm's states of mind in the end of the first book, and the beginning of the second; the eulogies of commerce and poesy, which follow; the description of Hamlet; the character of histrionic life in Serlo and Aurelia; that of sedate and lofty manhood in the uncle and Lothario. But, above all, let him turn to the history of Mignon. This mysterious child, at first neglected by the reader, gradually forced on his attention, at length overpowers him with an emotion more deep and thrilling than any poet since the days of Shakespeare has succeeded in producing. The daughter of enthusiasm, rapture, passion, and despair, she is of the earth, but not earthly. When she glides before us through the light mazes of her fairy dance, or twangs her cithern to the notes of her homesick verses, or whirls her tambourine and hurries round us like an antique Mænad, we could almost fancy her a spirit; so pure is she, so full of fervour, so disengaged from the clay of this world. And when all the fearful particulars of her story are at length laid together, and we behold in connected order the image of her hapless existence, there is, in those dim recollections, — those feelings so simple, so impassioned and unspeakable, consuming the closely

shrouded, woe-struck, yet ethereal spirit of the poor creature, — something which searches into the inmost recesses of the soul. It is not tears which her fate calls forth, but a feeling far too deep for tears. The very fire of heaven seems miserably quenched among the obstructions of this earth. Her little heart, so noble and so helpless, perishes before the smallest of its many beauties is unfolded; and all its loves and thoughts and longings do but add another pang to death, and sink to silence utter and eternal. It is as if the gloomy porch of Dis, and his pale kingdoms, were realised and set before us, and we heard the ineffectual wail of infants reverberating from within their prison walls for ever.

> "Continuò auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,
> Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo:
> Quos dulcis vitæ exsortes, et ab ubere raptos,
> Abstulit atra dies, et funere mersit acerbo."

The history of Mignon runs like a thread of gold through the tissue of the narrative, connecting with the heart much that were else addressed only to the head. Philosophy and eloquence might have done the rest, but this is poetry in the highest meaning of the word. It must be for the power of producing such creations and emotions, that Goethe is by many of his countrymen ranked at the side of Homer and Shakespeare, as one of the only three men of genius that have ever lived.

But my business here is not to judge of "Meister" or its author, it is only to prepare others for judging it; and for this purpose the most that I had room to say is said. All I ask in the name of this illustrious foreigner is, that the court which tries him be pure, and the jury instructed in the cause; that the work be not condemned for wanting what it was not meant to

have, and by persons nowise called to pass sentence on it.

Respecting my own humble share in the adventure, it is scarcely necessary to say anything. Fidelity is all the merit I have aimed at: to convey the author's sentiments, as he himself expressed them; to follow the original, in all the variations of its style, — has been my constant endeavour. In many points, both literary and moral, I could have wished devoutly that he had not written as he has done; but to alter anything was not in my commission. The literary and moral persuasions of a man like Goethe are objects of a rational curiosity, and the duty of a translator is simple and distinct. Accordingly, except a few phrases and sentences, not in all amounting to a page, which I have dropped as evidently unfit for the English taste, I have studied to present the work exactly as it stands in German. That my success has been indifferent, I already know too well. In rendering the ideas of Goethe, often so subtle, so capriciously expressive, the meaning was not always easy to seize, or to convey with adequate effect. There were thin tints of style, shades of ridicule or tenderness or solemnity, resting over large spaces, and so slight as almost to be evanescent: some of these I may have failed to see; to many of them I could do no justice. Nor, even in plainer matters, can I pride myself in having always imitated his colloquial familiarity without falling into sentences bald and rugged, into idioms harsh or foreign; or in having copied the flowing oratory of other passages, without at times exaggerating or defacing the swelling cadences and phrases of my original. But what work, from the translating of a German novel to the writing of an epic, was ever as the workman wished and meant it? This version of "Meister," with whatever faults it may have, I honestly present to my countrymen: if, while it makes any

portion of them more familiar with the richest, most gifted of living minds, it increase their knowledge, or even afford them a transient amusement, they will excuse its errors, and I shall be far more than paid for all my labour.

Book I.

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship

CHAPTER I.

THE play was late in breaking up; old Barbara went more than once to the window, and listened for the sound of carriages. She was waiting for Mariana, her pretty mistress, who had that night, in the afterpiece, been acting the part of a young officer, to the no small delight of the public. Barbara's impatience was greater than it used to be, when she had nothing but a frugal supper to present: on this occasion Mariana was to be surprised with a packet, which Norberg, a young and wealthy merchant, had sent by the post, to show that in absence he still thought of his love.

As an old servant, as confidant, counsellor, manager, and housekeeper, Barbara assumed the privilege of opening seals; and this evening she had the less been able to restrain her curiosity, as the favour of the open-handed gallant was more a matter of anxiety with herself than with her mistress. On breaking up the packet, she had found, with unfeigned satisfaction, that it held a piece of fine muslin and some ribbons of the newest fashion, for Mariana; with a quantity of calico, two or three neckerchiefs, and a moderate *rouleau* of money, for herself. Her esteem for the absent Norberg was of course unbounded: she meditated only how she might best present him to the

mind of Mariana, best bring to her recollection what she owed him, and what he had a right to expect from her fidelity and thankfulness.

The muslin, with the ribbons half unrolled, to set it off by their colours, lay like a Christmas present on the small table; the position of the lights increased the glitter of the gilt; all was in order, when the old woman heard Mariana's step on the stairs, and hastened to meet her. But what was her disappointment, when the little female officer, without deigning to regard her caresses, rushed past her with unusual speed and agitation, threw her hat and sword upon the table, and walked hastily up and down, bestowing not a look on the lights, or any portion of the apparatus.

"What ails thee, my darling?" exclaimed the astonished Barbara. "For Heaven's sake, what is the matter? Look here, my pretty child! See what a present! And who could have sent it but thy kindest of friends? Norberg has given thee the muslin to make a nightgown of; he will soon be here himself; he seems to be fonder and more generous than ever."

Barbara went to the table, that she might exhibit the memorials with which Norberg had likewise honoured *her*, when Mariana, turning away from the presents, exclaimed with vehemence, "Off! off! Not a word of all this to-night. I have yielded to thee; thou hast willed it; be it so! When Norberg comes, I am his, am thine, am any one's; make of me what thou pleasest; but till then I will be my own; and, if thou hadst a thousand tongues, thou shouldst never talk me from my purpose. All, all that *is* my own will I give up to him who loves me, whom I love. No sour faces! I will abandon myself to this affection, as if it were to last for ever."

The old damsel had abundance of objections and serious considerations to allege: in the progress of the

dialogue, she was growing bitter and keen, when Mariana sprang at her, and seized her by the breast. The old damsel laughed aloud. "I must have a care," she cried, "that you don't get into pantaloons again, if I mean to be sure of my life. Come, doff you! The girl will beg my pardon for the foolish things the boy is doing to me. Off with the frock. Off with them all. The dress beseems you not; it is dangerous for you, I observe; the epaulets make you too bold."

Thus speaking, she laid hands upon her mistress: Mariana pushed her off, exclaiming, "Not so fast! I expect a visit to-night."

"Visit!" rejoined Barbara: "You surely do not look for Meister, the young, soft-hearted, callow merchant's son?"

"Just for him," replied Mariana.

"Generosity appears to be growing your ruling passion," said the old woman with a grin: "you connect yourself with minors and moneyless people, as if they were the chosen of the earth. Doubtless it is charming to be worshipped as a benefactress."

"Jeer as thou pleasest. I love him! I love him! With what rapture do I now, for the first time, speak the word! *This* is the passion I have mimicked so often, when I knew not what it meant. Yes! I will throw myself about his neck: I will clasp him as if I could hold him for ever. I will show him all my love, will enjoy all his in its whole extent."

"Moderate yourself," said the old dame, coolly, "moderate yourself. A single word will interrupt your rapture: Norberg is coming! Coming in a fortnight! Here is the letter that arrived with the packet."

"And, though the morrow were to rob me of my friend, I would conceal it from myself and him. A fortnight! An age! Within a fortnight, what may not happen, what may not alter?"

Here Wilhelm entered. We need not say how fast

she flew to meet him, with what rapture he clasped the red uniform, and pressed the beautiful wearer of it to his bosom. It is not for us to describe the blessedness of two lovers. Old Barbara went grumbling away: we shall retire with her, and leave the happy two alone.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Wilhelm saluted his mother next morning, she informed him that his father was very greatly discontented with him, and meant to forbid him these daily visits to the playhouse. "Though I myself often go with pleasure to the theatre," she continued, "I could almost detest it entirely, when I think that our fireside peace is broken by your excessive passion for that amusement. Your father is ever repeating, 'What is the use of it? How can any one waste his time so?'"

"He has told me this already," said Wilhelm, "and perhaps I answered him too hastily; but, for Heaven's sake, mother, is nothing, then, of use but what immediately puts money in our purse? but what procures us some property that we can lay our hands on? Had we not, for instance, room enough in the old house? and was it indispensable to build a new one? Does not my father every year expend a large part of his profit in ornamenting his chambers? Are these silk carpets, this English furniture, likewise of no use? Might we not content ourselves with worse? For my own part, I confess, these striped walls, these hundred times repeated flowers and knots and baskets and figures, produce a really disagreeable effect upon me. At best, they but remind me of the front curtain of our theatre. But what a different thing it is to sit and look at that! There, if you must wait for awhile, you are always sure that it will rise at last, and disclose to you a thousand curious objects to entertain, to instruct, and to exalt you."

"But you go to excess with it," said the mother. "Your father wishes to be entertained in the evenings as well as you: besides, he thinks it diverts your attention; and, when he grows ill-humoured on the subject, it is I that must bear the blame. How often have I been upbraided with that miserable puppet-show, which I was unlucky enough to provide for you at Christmas, twelve years ago! It was the first thing that put these plays into your head."

"Oh, do not blame the poor puppets! do not repent of your love and motherly care! It was the only happy hour I had enjoyed in the new empty house. I never can forget that hour; I see it still before me; I recollect how surprised I was, when, after we had got our customary presents, you made us seat ourselves before the door that leads to the other room. The door opened, but not, as formerly, to let us pass and repass: the entrance was occupied by an unexpected show. Within it rose a porch, concealed by a mysterious curtain. All of us were standing at a distance: our eagerness to see what glittering or jingling article lay hid behind the half-transparent veil was mounting higher and higher, when you bade us each sit down upon his stool, and wait with patience.

"At length all of us were seated and silent: a whistle gave the signal; the curtain rolled aloft, and showed us the interior of the temple, painted in deep-red colours. The high-priest Samuel appeared with Jonathan, and their strange alternating voices seemed to me the most striking thing on earth. Shortly after entered Saul, overwhelmed with confusion at the impertinence of that heavy-limbed warrior, who had defied him and all his people. But how glad was I when the little dapper son of Jesse, with his crook and shepherd's pouch and sling, came hopping forth, and said, 'Dread king and sovereign lord, let no one's heart sink down because of this: if your Majesty will grant me

leave, I will go out to battle with this blustering giant!' Here ended the first act, leaving the spectators more curious than ever to see what further would happen; each praying that the music might soon be done. At last the curtain rose again. David devoted the flesh of the monster to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field: the Philistine scorned and bullied him, stamped mightily with both his feet, and at length fell like a mass of clay, affording a splendid termination to the piece. And then the virgins sang, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands!' The giant's head was borne before his little victor, who received the king's beautiful daughter to wife. Yet withal, I remember, I was vexed at the dwarfish stature of this lucky prince; for the great Goliath and the small David had both been formed, according to the common notion, with a due regard to their figures and proportions. I pray you, mother, tell me what has now become of those puppets? I promised to show them to a friend, whom I was lately entertaining with a history of all this child's work."

"I can easily conceive," said the mother, "how these things should stick so firmly in your mind: I well remember what an interest you took in them, — how you stole the little book from me, and learned the whole piece by heart. I first noticed it one evening when you had made a Goliath and a David of wax: you set them both to declaim against each other, and at length gave a deadly stab to the giant, fixing his shapeless head, stuck upon a large pin with a wax handle, in little David's hand. I then felt such a motherly contentment at your fine recitation and good memory, that I resolved to give you up the whole wooden troop to your own disposal. I did not then foresee that it would cause me so many heavy hours."

"Do not repent of it," said Wilhelm: "this little sport has often made us happy." So saying, he got the

keys, made haste to find the puppets, and, for a moment, was transported back into those times when they almost seemed to him alive, when he felt as if he himself could give them life by the cunning of his voice and the movements of his hands. He took them to his room, and locked them up with care.

CHAPTER III.

If the first love is indeed, as I hear it everywhere maintained to be, the most delicious feeling which the heart of man, before it or after, can experience, then our hero must be reckoned doubly happy, as permitted to enjoy the pleasure of this chosen period in all its fulness. Few men are so peculiarly favoured: by far the greater part are led by the feelings of their youth into nothing but a school of hardship, where, after a stinted and checkered season of enjoyment, they are at length constrained to renounce their dearest wishes, and to learn for ever to dispense with what once hovered before them as the highest happiness of existence.

Wilhelm's passion for that charming girl now soared aloft on the wings of imagination. After a short acquaintance, he had gained her affections: he found himself in possession of a being, whom, with all his heart, he not only loved, but honoured; for she had first appeared before him in the flattering light of theatric pomp, and his passion for the stage combined itself with his earliest love for woman. His youth allowed him to enjoy rich pleasures, which the activity of his fancy exalted and maintained. The situation of his mistress, too, gave a turn to her conduct which greatly enlivened his emotions. The fear lest her lover might, before the time, detect the real state in which she stood, diffused over all her conduct an interesting tinge of anxiety and bashfulness; her attachment to the youth was deep; her very inquietude appeared but to augment her tenderness; she was the loveliest of creatures while beside him.

When the first tumult of joy had passed, and our friend began to look back upon his life and its concerns, everything appeared new to him: his duties seemed holier, his inclinations keener, his knowledge clearer, his talents stronger, his purposes more decided. Accordingly, he soon fell upon a plan to avoid the reproaches of his father, to still the cares of his mother, and, at the same time, to enjoy Mariana's love without disturbance. Through the day he punctually transacted his business, commonly forbore attending the theatre, strove to be entertaining at table in the evening; and, when all were asleep, he glided softly out into the garden, and hastened, wrapped up in his mantle, with all the feelings of Leander in his bosom, to meet his mistress without delay.

"What is this you bring?" inquired Mariana, as he entered one evening, with a bundle, which Barbara, in hopes it might turn out to be some valuable present, fixed her eyes upon with great attention. "You will never guess," said Wilhelm.

Great was the surprise of Mariana, great the scorn of Barbara, when the napkin, being loosened, gave to view a perplexed multitude of span-long puppets. Mariana laughed aloud, as Wilhelm set himself to disentangle the confusion of the wires, and show her each figure by itself. Barbara glided sulkily out of the room.

A very little thing will entertain two lovers; and accordingly our friends, this evening, were as happy as they wished to be. The little troop was mustered: each figure was minutely examined, and laughed at, in its turn. King Saul, with his golden crown and his black velvet robe, Mariana did not like: he looked, she said, too stiff and pedantic. She was far better pleased with Jonathan, his sleek chin, his turban, his cloak of red and yellow. She soon got the art of turning him deftly on his wire: she made him bow, and

repeat declarations of love. On the other hand, she refused to give the least attention to the prophet Samuel; though Wilhelm commended the pontifical breastplate, and told her that the taffeta of the cassock had been taken from a gown of his own grandmother's. David she thought too small; Goliath was too big; she held by Jonathan. She grew to manage him so featly, and at last to extend her caresses from the puppet to its owner, that, on this occasion, as on others, a silly sport became the introduction to happy hours.

Their soft, sweet dreams were broken in upon by a noise which arose on the street. Mariana called for the old dame, who, as usual, was occupied in furbishing the changeful materials of the playhouse wardrobe for the service of the play next to be acted. Barbara said the disturbance arose from a set of jolly companions, who were just then sallying out of the Italian tavern hard by, where they had been busy discussing fresh oysters, a cargo of which had just arrived, and by no means sparing their champagne.

"Pity," Mariana said, "that we did not think of it in time: we might have had some entertainment to ourselves."

"It is not yet too late," said Wilhelm, giving Barbara a *louis-d'or:* "get us what we want, then come and take a share with us."

The old dame made speedy work; ere long a trimly covered table, with a neat collation, stood before the lovers. They made Barbara sit with them; they ate and drank, and enjoyed themselves.

On such occasions, there is never want of enough to say. Mariana soon took up little Jonathan again, and the old dame turned the conversation upon Wilhelm's favourite topic. "You were once telling us," she said, "about the first exhibition of a puppet-show on Christmas Eve: I remember you were interrupted just as the

ballet was going to begin. We have now the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with the honourable company by whom those wonderful effects were brought about."

"Oh, yes!" cried Mariana: "do tell us how it all went on, and how you felt then."

"It is a fine emotion, Mariana," said the youth, "when we bethink ourselves of old times, and old, harmless errors, especially if this is at a period when we have happily gained some elevation, from which we can look around us, and survey the path we have left behind. It is so pleasant to think, with composure and satisfaction, of many obstacles, which often with painful feelings we may have regarded as invincible,— pleasant to compare what we now are with what we then were struggling to become. But I am happy above others in this matter, that I speak to you about the past, at a moment when I can also look forth into the blooming country, which we are yet to wander through together, hand in hand."

"But how was it with the ballet?" said Barbara. "I fear it did not quite go off as it should have done."

"I assure you," said Wilhelm, "it went off quite well. And certainly the strange caperings of these Moors and Mooresses, these shepherds and shepherdesses, these dwarfs and dwarfesses, will never altogether leave my recollection while I live. When the curtain dropped, and the door closed, our little party skipped away, frolicking as if they had been tipsy, to their beds. For myself, however, I remember that I could not go to sleep: still wanting to have something told me on the subject, I continued putting questions to every one, and would hardly let the maid away who had brought me up to bed.

"Next morning, alas! the magic apparatus had altogether vanished; the mysterious veil was carried off; the door permitted us again to go and come through it

without obstruction; the manifold adventures of the evening had passed away, and left no trace behind. My brothers and sisters were running up and down with their playthings; I alone kept gliding to and fro; it seemed to me impossible that two bare door-posts could be all that now remained, where the night before so much enchantment had been displayed. Alas! the man that seeks a lost love can hardly be unhappier than I then thought myself."

A rapturous look, which he cast on Mariana, convinced her that he was not afraid of such ever being his case.

CHAPTER IV.

"My sole wish now," continued Wilhelm, "was to witness a second exhibition of the play. For this purpose I had recourse, by constant entreaties, to my mother; and she attempted in a favourable hour to persuade my father. Her labour, however, was in vain. My father's principle was, that none but enjoyments of rare occurrence were adequately prized; that neither young nor old could set a proper value on pleasures which they tasted every day.

"We might have waited long, perhaps till Christmas returned, had not the contriver and secret director of the spectacle himself felt a pleasure in repeating the display of it, partly incited, I suppose, by the wish to produce a brand new harlequin expressly prepared for the afterpiece.

"A young officer of the artillery, a person of great gifts in all sorts of mechanical contrivance, had served my father in many essential particulars during the building of the house; for which, having been handsomely rewarded, he felt desirous of expressing his thankfulness to the family of his patron, and so made us young ones a present of this complete theatre, which, in hours of leisure, he had already carved and painted, and strung together. It was this young man, who, with the help of a servant, had himself managed the puppets, disguising his voice to pronounce their various speeches. He had no great difficulty in persuading my father, who granted, out of complaisance to a friend, what he had denied from conviction to his children. In short, our theatre was again set up, some little ones

of the neighbourhood were invited, and the play was again represented.

"If I had formerly experienced the delights of surprise and astonishment, I enjoyed on this second occasion the pleasure of examining and scrutinising. *How* all this happened was my present concern. That the puppets themselves did not speak, I had already decided; that of themselves they did not move, I also conjectured; but, then, how came it all to be so pretty, and to look just as if they both spoke and moved of themselves? and where were the lights, and the people that managed the deception? These enigmas perplexed me the more, as I wished to be at the same time among the enchanters and the enchanted, at the same time to have a secret hand in the play, and to enjoy, as a looker-on, the pleasure of illusion.

"The play being finished, preparations were making for the farce: the spectators had risen, and were all busy talking together. I squeezed myself closer to the door, and heard, by the rattling within, that the people were packing up some articles. I lifted the lowest screen, and poked in my head between the posts. As our mother noticed it, she drew me back: but I had seen well enough that here friends and foes, Saul and Goliath, and whatever else their names might be, were lying quietly down together in a drawer; and thus my half-contented curiosity received a fresh excitement. To my great surprise, moreover, I had noticed the lieutenant very diligently occupied in the interior of the shrine. Henceforth, Jack-pudding, however he might clatter with his heels, could not any longer entertain me. I sank into deep meditation: my discovery made me both more satisfied, and less so, than before. After a little, it first struck me that I yet comprehended nothing: and here I was right; for the connection of the parts with each other was entirely unknown to me, and everything depends on that."

CHAPTER V.

"In well adjusted and regulated houses," continued Wilhelm, "children have a feeling not unlike what I conceive rats and mice to have: they keep a sharp eye on all crevices and holes, where they may come at any forbidden dainty; they enjoy it also with a fearful, stolen satisfaction, which forms no small part of the happiness of childhood.

"More than any other of the young ones, I was in the habit of looking out attentively, to see if I could notice any cupboard left open, or key standing in its lock. The more reverence I bore in my heart for those closed doors, on the outside of which I had to pass by for weeks and months, catching only a furtive glance when our mother now and then opened the consecrated place to take something from it, the quicker was I to make use of any opportunities which the forgetfulness of our housekeepers at times afforded me.

"Among all the doors, that of the storeroom was, of course, the one I watched most narrowly. Few of the joyful anticipations in life can equal the feeling which I used to have when my mother happened to call me, that I might help her to carry out something, whereupon I might pick up a few dried plums, either with her kind permission, or by help of my own dexterity. The accumulated treasures of this chamber took hold of my imagination by their magnitude: the very fragrance exhaled by so multifarious a collection of sweet-smelling spices produced such a craving effect on me, that I never failed, when passing near, to linger for a little, and regale myself at least on the unbolted atmos-

phere. At length, one Sunday morning, my mother, being hurried by the ringing of the church-bells, forgot to take this precious key with her on shutting the door, and went away, leaving all the house in a deep Sabbath stillness. No sooner had I marked this oversight than, gliding softly once or twice to and from the place, I at last approached very gingerly, opened the door, and felt myself, after a single step, in immediate contact with these manifold and long-wished-for means of happiness. I glanced over glasses, chests, and bags, and drawers and boxes, with a quick and doubtful eye, considering what I ought to choose and take; turned finally to my dear withered plums, provided myself also with a few dried apples, and completed the forage with an orange-chip. I was quietly retreating with my plunder, when some little chests, lying piled over one another, caught my attention, — the more so as I noticed a wire, with hooks at the end of it, sticking through the joint of the lid in one of them. Full of eager hopes, I opened this singular package; and judge of my emotions, when I found my glad world of heroes all sleeping safe within! I meant to pick out the topmost, and, having examined them, to pull up those below; but in this attempt the wires got very soon entangled: and I fell into a fright and flutter, more particularly as the cook just then began making some stir in the kitchen, which was close by; so that I had nothing for it but to squeeze the whole together the best way I could, and to shut the chest, having stolen from it nothing but a little written book, which happened to be lying above, and contained the whole drama of Goliath and David. With this booty I made good my retreat into the garret.

"Henceforth all my stolen hours of solitude were devoted to perusing the play, to learning it by heart, and picturing in thought how glorious it would be, could I but get the figures, to make them move along

with it. In idea I myself became David and Goliath by turns. In every corner of the courtyard, of the stables, of the garden, under all kinds of circumstances, I laboured to stamp the whole piece upon my mind; laid hold of all the characters, and learned their speeches by heart, most commonly, however, taking up the parts of the chief personages, and allowing all the rest to move along with them, but as satellites, across my memory. Thus day and night the heroic words of David, wherewith he challenged the braggart giant, Goliath of Gath, kept their place in my thoughts. I often muttered them to myself; while no one gave heed to me, except my father, who, frequently observing some such detached exclamation, would in secret praise the excellent memory of his boy, that had retained so much from only two recitations.

"By this means growing bolder and bolder, I one evening repeated almost the entire piece before my mother, whilst I was busied in fashioning some bits of wax into players. She observed it, questioned me hard; and I confessed.

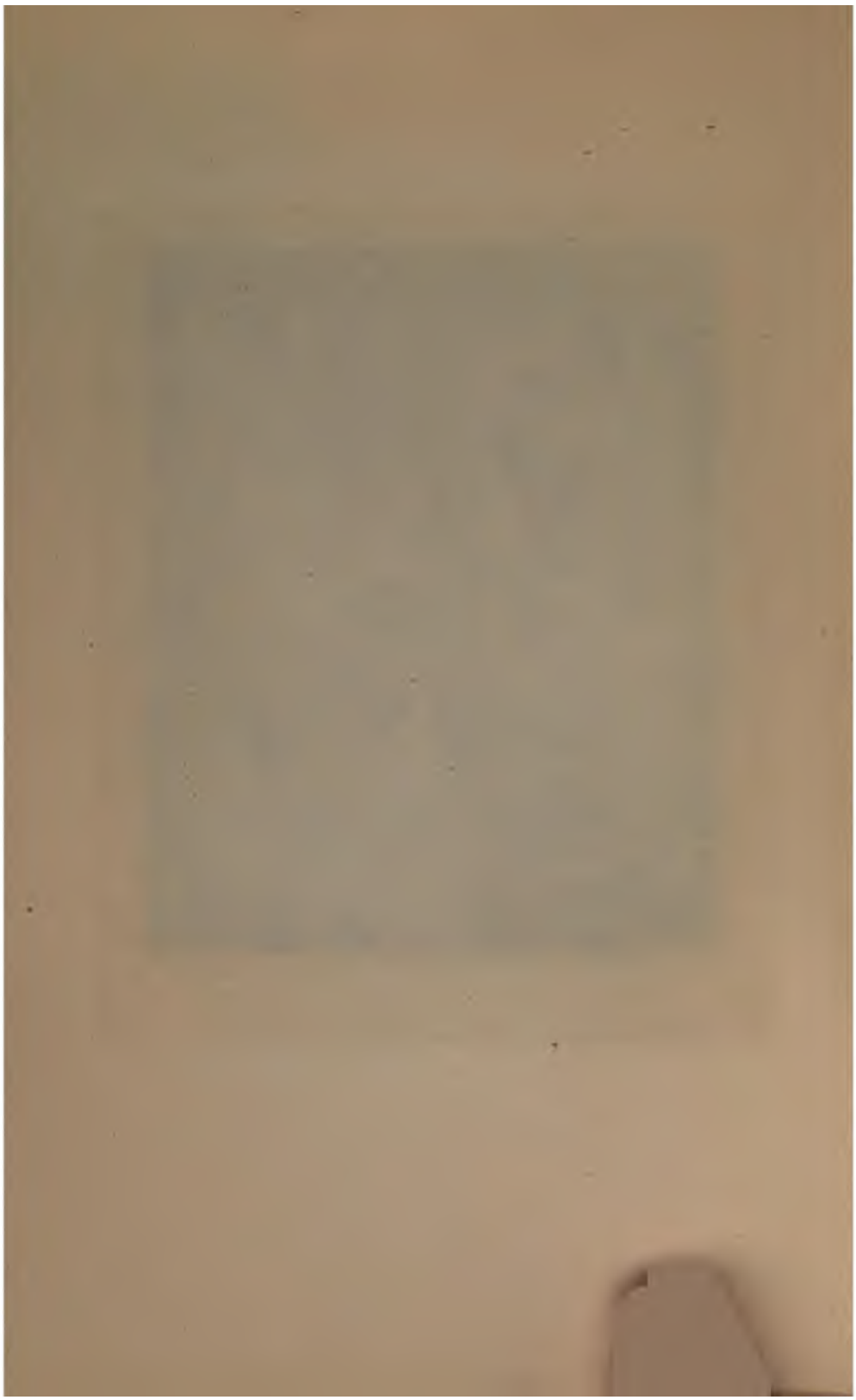
"By good fortune, this detection happened at a time when the lieutenant had himself been expressing a wish to initiate me in the mysteries of the art. My mother forthwith gave him notice of these unexpected talents; and he now contrived to make my parents offer him a couple of chambers in the top story, which commonly stood empty, that he might accommodate the spectators in the one, while the other held his actors, the proscenium again filling up the opening of the door: my father had allowed his friend to arrange all this; himself, in the meantime, seeming only to look at the transaction, as it were, through his fingers; for his maxim was, that children should not be allowed to see the kindness which is felt toward them, lest their pretensions come to extend too far. He was of opinion,

that, in the enjoyments of the young, one should assume a serious air; often interrupting the course of their festivities, to prevent their satisfaction from degenerating into excess and presumption."

CHAPTER VI.

"THE lieutenant now set up his theatre, and managed all the rest. During the week I readily observed that he often came into the house at unusual hours, and I soon guessed the cause. My eagerness increased immensely; for I well understood, that, till Sunday evening, I could have no share in what was going on. At last the wished-for day arrived. At five in the evening my conductor came, and took me up with him. Quivering with joy, I entered, and descried, on both sides of the framework, the puppets all hanging in order as they were to advance to view. I considered them narrowly, and mounted on the steps, which raised them above the scene, and allowed me to hover aloft over all that little world. Not without reverence did I look down between the pieces of board, and recollect what a glorious effect the whole would produce, and feel into what mighty secrets I was now admitted. We made a trial, which succeeded well.

"Next day a party of children were invited: we performed rarely; except that once, in the fire of action, I let poor Jonathan fall, and was obliged to reach down with my hand, and pick him up, — an accident which sadly marred the illusion, produced a peal of laughter, and vexed me unspeakably. My father, however, seemed to relish this misfortune not a little. Prudently shrouding up the contentment he felt at the expertness of his little boy, after the play was finished, he dwelt on the mistakes we had committed, saying it would all have been very pretty had not this or that gone wrong with us.



"I was vexed to the heart at these things, and sad for all the evening. By next morning, however, I had quite slept off my sorrow, and was blessed in the persuasion, that, but for this one fault, I had acted delightfully. The spectators also flattered me with their unanimous approval: they all maintained, that though the lieutenant, in regard to the coarse and the fine voices, had done great things, yet his declamation was in general too stiff and affected; whereas the new aspirant spoke his Jonathan and David with exquisite grace. My mother in particular commended the gallant tone in which I had challenged Goliath, and acted the modest victor before the king.

"From this time, to my extreme delight, the theatre continued open; and as the spring advanced, so that fires could be dispensed with, I passed all my hours of recreation lying in the garret, and making the puppets caper and play together. Often I invited up my comrades, or my brothers and sisters; but, when they would not come, I stayed by myself not the less. My imagination brooded over that tiny world, which soon afterward acquired another form.

"Scarcely had I once or twice exhibited the first play, for which my scenery and actors had been formed and decorated, when it ceased to give me any pleasure. On the other hand, among some of my grandfather's books, I had happened to fall in with 'The German Theatre,' and a few translations of Italian operas; in which works I soon got very deeply immersed, on each occasion first reckoning up the characters, and then, without further ceremony, proceeding to exhibit the play. King Saul, with his black velvet cloak, was therefore now obliged to personate Darius or Cato, or some other pagan hero; in which cases, it may be observed, the plays were never wholly represented,— for most part, only the fifth acts, where the cutting and stabbing lay.

"It was natural that the operas, with their manifold adventures and vicissitudes, should attract me more than anything beside. In these compositions I found stormy seas, gods descending in chariots of cloud, and, what most of all delighted me, abundance of thunder and lightning. I did my best with pasteboard, paint, and paper: I could make night very prettily; my lightning was fearful to behold; only my thunder did not always prosper, which, however, was of less importance. In operas, moreover, I found frequent opportunities of introducing my David and Goliath,— persons whom the regular drama would hardly admit. Daily I felt more attachment for the hampered spot where I enjoyed so many pleasures; and, I must confess, the fragrance which the puppets had acquired from the storeroom added not a little to my satisfaction.

"The decorations of my theatre were now in a tolerable state of completeness. I had always had the knack of drawing with compasses, and clipping pasteboard, and colouring figures; and here it served me in good stead. But the more sorry was I, on the other hand, when, as frequently happened, my stock of actors would not suffice for representing great affairs.

"My sisters, dressing and undressing their dolls, awoke in me the project of furnishing my heroes by and by with garments which might also be put off and on. Accordingly, I slit the scraps of cloth from off their bodies, tacked the fragments together as well as possible, saved a particle of money to buy new ribbons and lace, begged many a rag of taffeta, and so formed, by degrees, a full theatrical wardrobe, in which hoop-petticoats for the ladies were especially remembered.

"My troop was now fairly provided with dresses for the most important play, and you might have expected that, henceforth, one exhibition would follow close upon the heels of another; but it happened with me,

as it often happens with children, — they embrace wide plans, make mighty preparations, then a few trials, and the whole undertaking is abandoned. I was guilty of this fault. My greatest pleasure lay in the inventive part, and the employment of my fancy. This or that piece inspired me with interest for a few scenes of it, and immediately I set about providing new apparel suitable for the occasion. In such fluctuating operations, many parts of the primary dresses of my heroes had fallen into disorder, or totally gone out of sight; so that now the first great play could no longer be exhibited. I surrendered myself to my imagination; I rehearsed and prepared for ever; built a thousand castles in the air, and failed to see that I was at the same time undermining the foundations of these little edifices."

During this recital, Mariana had called up and put in action all her courtesy for Wilhelm, that she might conceal her sleepiness. Diverting as the matter seemed on one side, it was too simple for her taste, and her lover's view of it too serious. She softly pressed her foot on his, however, and gave him all visible signs of attention and approval. She drank out of his glass: Wilhelm was convinced that no word of his history had fallen to the ground. After a short pause, he said: "It is now your turn, Mariana, to tell me what were your first childish joys. Till now we have always been too busy with the present to trouble ourselves, on either side, about our previous way of life. Let me hear, Mariana, under what circumstances you were reared: what are the first lively impressions which you still remember?"

These questions would have very much embarrassed Mariana, had not Barbara made haste to help her. "Think you," said the cunning old woman, "we have been so mindful of what happened to us long ago, that we have merry things like these to talk about,

and, though we had, that we could give them such an air in talking of them?"

"As if they needed it!" cried Wilhelm. "I love this soft, good, amiable creature so much, that I regret every instant of my life which has not been spent beside her. Allow me, at least in fancy, to have a share in thy bygone life; tell me everything; I will tell everything to thee! If possible, we will deceive ourselves, and win back those days that have been lost to love."

"If you require it so eagerly," replied the old dame, "we can easily content you. Only, in the first place, let us hear how your taste for the theatre gradually reached a head; how you practised, how you improved so happily, that now you can pass for a superior actor. No doubt you must have met with droll adventures in your progress. It is not worth while to go to bed now: I have still one flask in reserve; and who knows whether we shall soon all sit together so quiet and cheery again?"

Mariana cast upon her a mournful look, not noticed by Wilhelm, who proceeded with his narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

"THE recreations of youth, as my companions began to increase in number, interfered with this solitary, still enjoyment. I was by turns a hunter, a soldier, a knight, as our games required; and constantly I had this small advantage above the rest, that I was qualified to furnish them suitably with the necessary equipments. The swords, for example, were generally of my manufacture; I gilded and decorated the scabbards; and a secret instinct allowed me not to stop till our militia was accoutred according to the antique model. Helmets, with plumes of paper, were got ready; shields, even coats of mail, were provided; undertakings in which such of the servants as had aught of the tailor in them, and the seamstresses of the house, broke many a needle.

"A part of my comrades I had now got well equipped; by degrees, the rest were likewise furbished up, though on a thriftier plan; and so a very seemly corps at length was mustered. We marched about the courtyards and gardens, smote fearfully upon each other's shields and heads: many flaws of discord rose among us, but none that lasted.

"This diversion greatly entertained my fellows; but scarcely had it been twice or thrice repeated, when it ceased to content me. The aspect of so many harnessed figures naturally stimulated in my mind those ideas of chivalry, which for some time, since I had commenced the reading of old romances, were filling my imagination.

"Koppen's translation of 'Jerusalem Delivered' at

length fell into my hands, and gave these wandering thoughts a settled direction. The whole poem, it is true, I could not read; but there were passages which I learned by heart, and the images expressed in these hovered round me. Particularly was I captivated with Clorinda, and all her deeds and bearing. The masculine womanhood, the peaceful completeness of her being, had a greater influence upon my mind, just beginning to unfold itself, than the factitious charms of Armida; though the garden of that enchantress was by no means an object of my contempt.

"But a hundred and a hundred times, while walking in the evenings on the balcony which stretches along the front of the house, and looking over the neighbourhood, as the quivering splendour streamed up at the horizon from the departed sun, and the stars came forth, and night pressed forward from every cleft and hollow, and the small, shrill tone of the cricket tinkled through the solemn stillness, — a hundred and a hundred times have I repeated to myself the history of the mournful duel between Tancred and Clorinda.

"However strongly I inclined by nature to the party of the Christians, I could not help declaring for the Paynim heroine with all my heart when she engaged to set on fire the great tower of the besiegers. And when Tancred, in the darkness, met the supposed knight, and the strife began between them under that veil of gloom, and the two battled fiercely, I could never pronounce the words, —

> "'But now the sure and fated hour is nigh:
> Clorinda's course is ended, — she must die;'—

without tears rushing into my eyes, which flowed plentifully when the hapless lover, plunging his sword into her breast, opened the departing warrior's helmet, rec-

ognised the lady of his heart, and, shuddering, brought water to baptise her.

"How my heart ran over when Tancred struck with his sword that tree in the enchanted wood; when blood flowed from the gash, and a voice sounded in his ears, that now again he was wounding Clorinda; that Destiny had marked him out ever unwittingly to injure what he loved beyond all else.

"The recital took such hold of my imagination, that what I had read of the poem began dimly, in my mind, to conglomerate into a whole; wherewith I was so taken that I could not but propose to have it some way represented. I meant to have Tancred and Rinaldo acted; and, for this purpose, two coats of mail, which I had before manufactured, seamed expressly suitable. The one, formed of dark gray paper with scales, was to serve for the solemn Tancred; the other, of silver and gilt paper, for the magnificent Rinaldo. In the vivacity of my anticipations, I told the whole project to my comrades, who felt quite charmed with it, except that they could not well comprehend how so glorious a thing could be exhibited, and, above all, exhibited by them.

"Such scruples I easily set aside. Without hesitation, I took upon me, in idea, the management of two rooms in the house of a neighbouring playmate; not calculating that his venerable aunt would never give them up, or considering how a theatre could be made of them, whereof I had no settled notion, except that it was to be fixed on beams, to have side-scenes made of parted folding-screens, and on the floor a large piece of cloth. From what quarter these materials and furnishings were to come, I had not determined.

"So far as concerned the forest, we fell upon a good expedient. We betook ourselves to an old servant of one of our families, who had now become a woodman, with many entreaties that he would get us a few young

firs and birches; which actually arrived more speedily than we had reason to expect. But, in the next place, great was our embarrassment as to how the piece should be got up before the trees were withered. Now was the time for prudent counsel. We had no house, no scenery, no curtain: the folding-screens were all we had.

"In this forlorn condition we again applied to the lieutenant, giving him a copious description of all the glorious things we meant to do. Little as he understood us, he was very helpful: he piled all the tables he could get in the house or neighbourhood, one above the other, in a little room: to these he fixed our folding-screens, and made a back view with green curtains, sticking up our trees along with it.

"At length the appointed evening came: the candles were lit, the maids and children were sitting in their places, the piece was to go forward, the whole corps of heroes was equipped and dressed, — when each for the first time discovered that he knew not what he was to say. In the heat of invention, being quite immersed in present difficulties, I had forgotten the necessity of each understanding what and where he was to speak; nor, in the midst of our bustling preparations, had it once occurred to the rest; each believing he could easily enact a hero, easily so speak and bear himself, as became the personage into whose world I had transplanted him. They all stood wonder-struck, asking, What was to come first? I alone, having previously got ready Tancred's part, entered *solus* on the scene, and began reciting some verses of the epic. But as the passage soon changed into narrative, and I, while speaking, was at once transformed into a third party, and the bold Godfredo, when his turn came, would not venture forth, I was at last obliged to take leave of my spectators under peals of laughter, — a disaster which cut me to the heart. Thus had our undertaking proved

abortive; but the company still kept their places, still wishing to see something. All of us were dressed: I screwed my courage up, and determined, foul or fair, to give them David and Goliath. Some of my companions had before this helped me to exhibit the puppet-play; all of them had often seen it; we shared the characters among us; each promised to do his best; and one small, grinning urchin painted a black beard upon his chin, and undertook, if any *lacuna* should occur, to fill it with drollery as harlequin, — an arrangement to which, as contradicting the solemnity of the piece, I did not consent without extreme reluctance; and I vowed within myself, that, if once delivered out of this perplexity, I would think long and well before risking the exhibition of another play."

CHAPTER VIII.

MARIANA, overpowered with sleep, leaned upon her lover, who clasped her close to him, and proceeded in his narrative; while the old damsel prudently sipped up the remainder of the wine.

"The embarrassment," he said, "into which, along with my companions, I had fallen, by attempting to act a play that did not anywhere exist, was soon forgotten. My passion for representing each romance I read, each story that was told me, would not yield before the most unmanageable materials. I felt convinced that whatever gave delight in narrative must produce a far deeper impression when exhibited: I wanted to have everything before my eyes, everything brought forth upon the stage. At school, when the elements of general history were related to us, I carefully marked the passages where any person had been slain or poisoned in a singular way; and my imagination, glancing rapidly along the exposition and intrigue, hastened to the interesting fifth act. Indeed, I actually began to write some plays from the end backwards, without, however, in any of them reaching the beginning.

"At the same time, partly by inclination, partly by the counsel of my good friends, who had caught the fancy of acting plays, I read a whole wilderness of theatrical productions, as chance put them into my hands. I was still in those happy years when all things please us, when number and variety yield us abundant satisfaction. Unfortunately, too, my taste was corrupted by another circumstance. Any piece

delighted me especially, in which I could hope to give delight; there were few which I did not peruse in this agreeable delusion: and my lively conceptive power enabling me to transfer myself into all the characters, seduced me to believe that I might likewise represent them all. Hence, in the distribution of the parts, I commonly selected such as did not fit me, and always more than one part, if I could by any means accomplish more.

"In their games, children can make all things out of any: a staff becomes a musket, a splinter of wood a sword, any bunch of cloth a puppet, any crevice a chamber. Upon this principle was our private theatre got up. Totally unacquainted with the measure of our strength, we undertook all: we stuck at no *quid pro quo*, and felt convinced that every one would take us for what we gave ourselves out to be. Now, however, our affairs went on so soberly and smoothly, that I have not even a curious insipidity to tell you of. We first acted all the few plays in which only males are requisite, next we travestied some of ourselves, and at last took our sisters into the concern along with us. In one or two houses, our amusement was looked upon as profitable, and company was invited to see it. Nor did our lieutenant of artillery now turn his back upon us. He showed us how we ought to make our exits and our entrances; how we should declaim, and with what attitudes and gestures. Yet generally he earned small thanks for his toil, we conceiving ourselves to be much deeper in the secrets of theatrical art than he himself was.

"We very soon began to grow tired of tragedy; for all of us believed, as we had often heard, that it was easier to write or represent a tragedy than to attain proficiency in comedy. In our first attempts, accordingly, we had felt as if exactly in our element: dignity of rank, elevation of character, we studied to approach

by stiffness and affectation, and imagined that we succeeded rarely; but our happiness was not complete, except we might rave outright, might stamp with our feet, and, full of fury and despair, cast ourselves upon the ground.

"Boys and girls had not long carried on these amusements in concert, till Nature began to take her course; and our society branched itself off into sundry little love-associations, as generally more than one sort of comedy is acted in the playhouse. Behind the scenes, each happy pair pressed hands in the most tender style; they floated in blessedness, appearing to one another quite ideal persons, when so transformed and decorated; whilst, on the other hand, unlucky rivals consumed themselves with envy, and out of malice and spite worked every species of mischief.

"Our amusements, though undertaken without judgment, and carried on without instruction, were not without their use to us. We trained our memories and persons, and acquired more dexterity in speech and gesture than is usually met with at so early an age. But, for me in particular, this time was in truth an epoch: my mind turned all its faculties exclusively to the theatre; and my highest happiness was in reading, in writing, or in acting, plays.

"Meanwhile the labours of my regular teachers continued: I had been set apart for the mercantile life, and placed under the guidance of our neighbour in the counting-house; yet my spirit at this very time recoiled more forcibly than ever from all that was to bind me to a low profession. It was to the stage that I aimed at consecrating all my powers, — on the stage that I meant to seek all my happiness and satisfaction.

"I recollect a poem, which must be among my papers, where the Muse of tragic art and another female form, by which I personified Commerce, were made to strive very bravely for my most important

self. The idea is common, nor do I recollect that the verses were of any worth; but you shall see it, for the sake of the fear, the abhorrence, the love and passion, which are prominent in it. How repulsively did I paint the old housewife, with the distaff in her girdle, the bunch of keys by her side, the spectacles on her nose, ever toiling, ever restless, quarrelsome, and penurious, pitiful and dissatisfied! How feelingly did I describe the condition of that poor man who has to cringe beneath her rod, and earn his slavish day's wages by the sweat of his brow!

"And how differently advanced the other! What an apparition for the overclouded mind! Formed as a queen, in her thoughts and looks she announced herself the child of freedom. The feeling of her own worth gave her dignity without pride: her apparel became her, it veiled her form without constraining it; and the rich folds repeated, like a thousand-voiced echo, the graceful movements of the goddess. What a contrast! How easy for me to decide! Nor had I forgotten the more peculiar characteristics of my Muse. Crowns and daggers, chains and masks, as my predecessors had delivered them, were here produced once more. The contention was keen: the speeches of both were palpably enough contrasted, for at fourteen years of age one usually paints the black lines and the white pretty near each other. The old lady spoke as beseemed a person that would pick up a pin from her path; the other, like one that could give away kingdoms. The warning threats of the housewife were disregarded; I turned my back upon her promised riches: disinherited and naked, I gave myself up to the Muse; she threw her golden veil over me, and called me hers.

"Could I have thought, my dearest," he exclaimed, pressing Mariana close to him, "that another, a more lovely goddess, would come to encourage me in my

purpose, to travel with me on my journey, the poem might have had a finer turn, a far more interesting end. Yet it is no poetry, it is truth and life that I feel in thy arms: let us prize the sweet happiness, and consciously enjoy it."

The pressure of his arms, the emotion of his elevated voice, awoke Mariana, who hastened by caresses to conceal her embarrassment: for no word of the last part of his story had reached her. It is to be wished, that in future, our hero, when recounting his favourite histories, may find more attentive hearers.

CHAPTER IX.

THUS Wilhelm passed his nights in the enjoyment of confiding love, his days in the expectation of new happy hours. When desire and hope had first attracted him to Mariana, he already felt as if inspired with new life; felt as if he were beginning to be another man; he was now united to her; the contentment of his wishes had become a delicious habitude. His heart strove to ennoble the object of his passion; his spirit, to exalt with it the young creature whom he loved. In the shortest absence, thoughts of her arose within him. If she had once been necessary to him, she was now grown indispensable, now that he was bound to her by all the ties of nature. His pure soul felt that she was the half, more than the half, of himself. He was grateful and devoted without limit.

Mariana, too, succeeded in deceiving herself for a season: she shared with him the feeling of his liveliest blessedness. Alas! if but the cold hand of self-reproach had not often come across her heart! She was not secure from it, even in Wilhelm's bosom, even under the wings of his love. And when she was again left alone, again left to sink from the clouds, to which passion had exalted her, into the consciousness of her real condition, then she was indeed to be pitied. So long as she had lived among degrading perplexities, disguising from herself her real situation, or rather never thinking of it, frivolity had helped her through; the incidents she was exposed to had come upon her each by itself; satisfaction and vexation had cancelled one another; humiliation had been compensated by

vanity; want by frequent, though momentary, superfluity; she could plead necessity and custom as a law or an excuse; and hitherto all painful emotions from hour to hour, and from day to day, had by these means been shaken off. But now, for some instants, the poor girl had felt herself transported to a better world; aloft, as it were, in the midst of light and joy, she had looked down upon the abject desert of her life, had felt what a miserable creature is the woman, who, inspiring desire, does not also inspire reverence and love: she regretted and repented, but found herself outwardly or inwardly no better for regret. She had nothing that she could accomplish or resolve upon. When she looked into and searched herself, all was waste and void within her soul: her heart had no place of strength or refuge. But the more sorrowful her state was, the more vehemently did her feelings cling to the man she loved: her passion for him even waxed stronger daily, as the danger of losing him came daily nearer.

Wilhelm, on the other hand, soared serenely happy in higher regions: to him also a new world had been disclosed, but a world rich in the most glorious prospects. Scarcely had the first excess of joy subsided, when all that had long been gliding dimly through his soul stood up in bright distinctness before it. She is mine! She has given herself up to me! She, the loved, the wished for, the adored, has given herself up to me in trust and faith: she shall not find me ungrateful for the gift. Standing or walking, he talked to himself; his heart constantly overflowed; with a copiousness of splendid words, he uttered to himself the loftiest emotions. He imagined that he understood the visible beckoning of Fate, reaching out its hand by Mariana to save him from the stagnant, weary, drudging life, out of which he had so often wished for deliverance. To leave his father's house and people,

now appeared a light matter. He was young, and had not tried the world: his eagerness to range over its expanses, seeking fortune and contentment, was stimulated by his love. His vocation for the theatre was now clear to him: the high goal, which he saw raised before him, seemed nearer whilst he was advancing to it with Mariana's hand in his; and, in his comfortable prudence, he beheld in himself the embryo of a great actor, — the future founder of that national theatre, for which he heard so much and various sighing on every side. All that till now had slumbered in the innermost corners of his soul, at length awoke. He painted for himself a picture of his manifold ideas, in the colours of love, upon a canvas of cloud: the figures of it, indeed, ran sadly into one another; yet the whole had an air but the more brilliant on that account.

CHAPTER X.

He was now in his chamber at home, ransacking his papers, making ready for departure. Whatever savoured of his previous employment he threw aside, meaning at his entrance upon life to be free, even from recollections that could pain him. Works of taste alone, poets and critics, were, as acknowledged friends, placed among the chosen few. Heretofore he had given little heed to the critical authors: his desire for instruction now revived, when, again looking through his books, he found the theoretical part of them lying generally still uncut. In the full persuasion that such works were absolutely necessary, he had bought a number of them: but, with the best disposition in the world, he had not reached midway in any.

The more steadfastly, on the other hand, he had dwelt upon examples, and, in every kind that was known to him, had made attempts himself.

Werner entered the room; and, seeing his friend busied with the well-known sheets, he exclaimed, "Again among your papers? And without intending, I dare swear, to finish any one of them! You look them through and through once or twice, then throw them by, and begin something new."

"To finish is not the scholar's care: it is enough if he improves himself by practice."

"But also completes according to his best ability."

"And still the question might be asked, 'Is there not good hope of a youth, who, on commencing some unsuitable affair, soon discovers its unsuitableness, and

discontinues his exertions, not choosing to spend toil and time on what never can be of any value?'"

"I know well enough it was never your concern to bring aught to a conclusion: you have always sickened on it before it came half-way. When you were the director of our puppet-show, for instance, how many times were fresh clothes got ready for the dwarfish troop, fresh decorations furbished up? Now this tragedy was to be acted, now that: and at the very best you gave us some fifth act, where all was going topsy-turvy, and people cutting one another's throats."

"If you talk of those times, whose blame really was it that we ripped off from our puppets the clothes that fitted them, and were fast stitched to their bodies, and laid out money for a large and useless wardrobe? Was it not yours, my good friend, who had always some fragment of ribbon to traffic with; and skill, at the same time, to stimulate my taste, and turn it to your profit?"

Werner laughed, and continued, "I still recollect, with pleasure, how I used to extract gain from your theatrical campaigns, as army contractors do from war. When you mustered for the 'Deliverance of Jerusalem,' I, for my part, made a pretty thing of profit, like the Venetians in the corresponding case. I know of nothing in the world more rational than to turn the folly of others to our own advantage."

"Perhaps it were a nobler satisfaction to cure men of their follies."

"From the little I know of men, this might seem a vain endeavour. But something toward it is always done, when any individual man grows wise and rich; and generally this happens at the cost of others."

"Well, here is 'The Youth at the Parting of the Ways:' it has just come into my hand," said Wilhelm, drawing out a bunch of papers from the rest; "this at least is finished, whatever else it may be."

"Away with it! to the fire with it!" cried Werner. "The invention does not deserve the smallest praise: that affair has plagued me enough already, and drawn upon yourself your father's wrath. The verses may be altogether beautiful, but the meaning of them is fundamentally false. I still recollect your Commerce personified: a shrivelled, wretched-looking sibyl she was. I suppose you picked up the image of her from some miserable huckster's shop. At that time you had no true idea at all of trade; whilst I could not think of any man whose spirit was, or needed to be, more enlarged than the spirit of a genuine merchant. What a thing is it to see the order which prevails throughout his business! By means of this he can at any time survey the general whole, without needing to perplex himself in the details. What advantages does he derive from the system of bookkeeping by double entry! It is among the finest inventions of the human mind: every prudent master of a house should introduce it into his economy."

"Pardon me," said Wilhelm, smiling; "you begin by the form, as if it were the matter: you traders commonly, in your additions and balancings, forget what is the proper net result of life."

"My good friend, you do not see how form and matter are in this case one, how neither can exist without the other. Order and arrangement increase the desire to save and get. A man embarrassed in his circumstances, and conducting them imprudently, likes best to continue in the dark: he will not gladly reckon up the debtor entries he is charged with. But, on the other hand, there is nothing to a prudent manager more pleasant than daily to set before himself the sums of his growing fortune. Even a mischance, if it surprise and vex, will not affright, him; for he knows at once what gains he has acquired to cast into the other scale. I am convinced, my friend, that, if

you once had a proper taste for our employments, you would grant that many faculties of the mind are called into full and vigorous play by them."

"Possibly this journey I am thinking of may bring me to other thoughts."

"Oh, certainly! Believe me, you want but to look upon some great scene of activity to make you ours for ever; and, when you come back, you will joyfully enroll yourself among that class of men whose art it is to draw toward themselves a portion of the money, and materials of enjoyment, which circulate in their appointed courses through the world. Cast a look on the natural and artificial productions of all the regions of the earth; consider how they have become, one here, another there, articles of necessity for men. How pleasant and how intellectual a task is it to calculate, at any moment, what is most required, and yet is wanting, or hard to find; to procure for each easily and soon what he demands; to lay in your stock prudently beforehand, and then to enjoy the profit of every pulse in that mighty circulation. This, it appears to me, is what no man that has a head can attend to without pleasure."

Wilhelm seemed to acquiesce, and Werner continued.

"Do but visit one or two great trading-towns, one or two seaports, and see if you can withstand the impression. When you observe how many men are busied, whence so many things have come, and whither they are going, you will feel as if you, too, could gladly mingle in the business. You will then see the smallest piece of ware in its connection with the whole mercantile concern; and for that very reason you will reckon nothing paltry, because everything augments the circulation by which you yourself are supported."

Werner had formed his solid understanding in constant intercourse with Wilhelm: he was thus accustomed to think also of *his* profession, of *his*

employments, with elevation of soul; and he firmly believed that he did so with more justice than his otherwise more gifted and valued friend, who, as it seemed to him, had placed his dearest hopes, and directed all the force of his mind, upon the most imaginary objects in the world. Many a time he thought his false enthusiasm would infallibly be got the better of, and so excellent a soul be brought back to the right path. So hoping in the present instance, he continued, "The great ones of the world have taken this earth of ours to themselves: they live in the midst of splendour and superfluity. The smallest nook of the land is already a possession which none may touch or meddle with: offices and civil callings bring in little profit. Where, then, will you find more honest acquisitions, juster conquests, than those of trade? If the princes of this world hold the rivers, the highways, the havens, in their power, and take a heavy tribute from everything that passes through them, may not we embrace with joy the opportunity of levying tax and toll, by *our* activity, on those commodities which the real or imaginary wants of men have rendered indispensable? I can promise you, if you would rightly apply your poetic view, my goddess might be represented as an invincible, victorious queen, and boldly opposed to yours. It is true, she bears the olive rather than the sword: dagger or chain she knows not. But she, too, gives crowns to her favourites; which, without offence to yours be it said, are of true gold from the furnace and the mine, and glance with genuine pearls, which she brings up from the depths of the ocean by the hands of her unwearied servants."

This sally somewhat nettled Wilhelm; but he concealed his sentiments, remembering that Werner used to listen with composure to *his* apostrophes. Besides, he had fairness enough to be pleased at seeing each man think the best of his own peculiar craft, provided

only *his*, of which he was so passionately fond, were likewise left in peace.

"And for you," exclaimed Werner, "who take so warm an interest in human concerns, what a sight will it be to behold the fortune, which accompanies bold undertakings, distributed to men before your eyes! What is more spirit-stirring than the aspect of a ship arriving from a lucky voyage, or soon returning with a rich capture? Not only the relatives, the acquaintances, and those that share with the adventurers, but every unconcerned spectator also, is excited, when he sees the joy with which the long-imprisoned shipman springs on land before his keel has wholly reached it, feeling that he is free once more, and now can trust what he has rescued from the false sea to the firm and faithful earth. It is not, my friend, in figures of arithmetic alone that gain presents itself before us. Fortune is the goddess of breathing men: to feel her favours truly, we must live and be men who toil with their living minds and bodies, and enjoy with them also."

CHAPTER XI.

IT is now time that we should know something more of Wilhelm's father and of Werner's, — two men of very different modes of thinking, but whose opinions so far coincided, that both regarded commerce as the noblest calling; and both were peculiarly attentive to every advantage which any kind of speculation might produce to them. Old Meister, when his father died, had turned into money a valuable collection of pictures, drawings, copper-plates, and antiquities: he had entirely rebuilt and furnished his house in the newest style, and turned his other property to profit in all possible ways. A considerable portion of it he had embarked in trade, under the direction of the elder Werner, — a man noted as an active merchant, whose speculations were commonly favoured by fortune. But nothing was so much desired by Meister as to confer upon his son those qualities of which himself was destitute, and to leave his children advantages which he reckoned it of the highest importance to possess. Withal, he felt a peculiar inclination for magnificence, — for whatever catches the eye, and possesses at the same time real worth and durability. In his house he would have all things solid and massive: his stores must be copious and rich, all his plate must be heavy, the furniture of his table must be costly. On the other hand, his guests were seldom invited; for every dinner was a festival, which, both for its expense and for its inconvenience, could not often be repeated. The economy of his house went on at a settled, uniform rate; and every-

thing that moved or had place in it was just what yielded no one any real enjoyment.

The elder Werner, in his dark and hampered house, led quite another sort of life. The business of the day, in his narrow counting-house, at his ancient desk, once done, Werner liked to eat well, and, if possible, to drink better. Nor could he fully enjoy good things in solitude: with his family he must always see at table his friends, and any stranger that had the slightest connection with his house. His chairs were of unknown age and antic fashion, but he daily invited some to sit on them. The dainty victuals arrested the attention of his guests, and none remarked that they were served up in common ware. His cellar held no great stock of wine, but the emptied niches were usually filled by more of a superior sort.

So lived these two fathers, often meeting to take counsel about their common concerns. On the day we are speaking of, it had been determined to send Wilhelm out from home, for the despatch of some commercial affairs.

"Let him look about him in the world," said old Meister, "and at the same time carry on our business in distant parts. One cannot do a young man any greater kindness than initiate him early in the future business of his life. Your son returned so happily from his first expedition, and transacted his affairs so cleverly, that I am very curious to see how mine will do: *his* experience, I fear, will cost him dearer."

Old Meister had a high notion of his son's faculties and capabilities: he said this in the hope that his friend would contradict him, and hold up to view the admirable gifts of the youth. Here, however, he deceived himself. Old Werner, who, in practical concerns, would trust no man but such as he had proved, answered placidly, "One must try all things. We can send him on the same journey; we shall give him

a paper of directions to conduct him. There are sundry debts to be gathered in, old connections are to be renewed, new ones to be made. He may likewise help the speculation I was lately talking of; for, without punctual intelligence gathered on the spot, there is little to be done in it."

"He must prepare," said Meister, "and set forth as soon as possible. Where shall we get a horse for him to suit this business?"

"We shall not seek far. The shopkeeper in H——, who owes us somewhat, but is withal a good man, has offered me a horse instead of payment. My son knows it, and tells me it is a serviceable beast."

"He may fetch it himself. Let him go with the diligence; the day after to-morrow he is back again betimes; we have his saddle-bags and letters made ready in the meantime; he can set out on Monday morning."

Wilhelm was sent for, and informed of their determination. Who so glad as he, now seeing the means of executing his purpose put into his hands, the opportunity made ready for him, without coöperation of his own! So intense was his love, so full was his conviction of the perfect rectitude of his intention to escape from the pressure of his actual mode of life, and follow a new and nobler career, that his conscience did not in the least rebel; no anxiety arose within him; he even reckoned the deception he was meditating holy. He felt certain, that, in the long run, parents and relations would praise and bless him for this resolution: he acknowledged in these concurring circumstances the signal of a guiding fate.

How slowly the time passed with him till night, till the hour when he should again see his Mariana! He sat in his chamber, and revolved the plan of his journey; as a conjurer, or a cunning thief in durance, often draws out his feet from the fast-locked irons, to

cherish in himself the conviction that his deliverance is possible, nay, nearer than short-sighted turnkeys believe.

At last the appointed hour struck. He went out, shook off all anxiety, and hastened through the silent streets. In the middle of the great square he raised his hands to the sky, feeling as if all was behind him and below him: he had freed himself from all. One moment he figured himself as in the arms of his beloved, the next as glancing with her in the splendours of the stage: he soared aloft in a world of hopes, only now and then the call of some watchman brought to his recollection that he was still wandering on the vulgar earth.

Mariana came to the stairs to meet him, — and how beautiful, how lovely! She received him in the new white *negligée:* he thought he had never seen her so charming. Thus did she handsel the gift of her absent lover in the arms of a present one; with true passion she lavished on her darling the whole treasure of those caresses which nature suggested, or art had taught: need we ask if he was happy, if he was blessed?

He disclosed to her what had passed, and showed her, in general terms, his plan and his wishes. He would try, he said, to find a residence, then come back for her: he hoped she would not refuse him her hand. The poor girl was silent: she concealed her tears, and pressed her friend against her bosom. Wilhelm, though interpreting her silence in the most favourable manner, could have wished for a distinct reply; and still more, when at last he inquired of her in the tenderest and most delicate terms, if he might not think himself a father. But to this she answered only with a sigh, with a kiss.

CHAPTER XII.

NEXT morning Mariana awoke only to new despondency; she felt herself very solitary; she wished not to see the light of day, but stayed in bed, and wept. Old Barbara sat down by her, and tried to persuade and console her; but it was not in her power so soon to heal the wounded heart. The moment was now at hand to which the poor girl had been looking forward as to the last of her life. Who could be placed in a more painful situation? The man she loved was departing; a disagreeable lover was threatening to come; and the most fearful mischiefs were to be anticipated, if the two, as might easily happen, should meet together.

"Calm yourself, my dear," said the old woman: "do not spoil your pretty eyes with crying. Is it, then, so terrible a thing to have two lovers? And though you can bestow your love but on the one, yet be thankful to the other, who, caring for you as he does, certainly deserves to be named your friend."

"My poor Wilhelm," said the other, all in tears, "had warning that a separation was at hand. A dream discovered to him what we strove so much to hide. He was sleeping calmly at my side; on a sudden I heard him mutter some unintelligible sounds: I grew frightened, and awoke him. Ah! with what love and tenderness and warmth did he clasp me! 'O Mariana!' cried he, 'what a horrid fate have you freed me from! How shall I thank you for deliverance from such torment? I dreamed that I was far from you in an unknown country, but your figure

hovered before me; I saw you on a beautiful hill, the sunshine was glancing over it all; how charming you looked! But it had not lasted long, before I observed your image sinking down, sinking, sinking: I stretched out my arms toward you; they could not reach you through the distance. Your image still kept gliding down: it approached a great sea that lay far extended at the foot of the hill, — a marsh rather than a sea. All at once a man gave you his hand, and seemed meaning to conduct you upwards; but he led you sidewards, and appeared to draw you after him. I cried out: as I could not reach you, I hoped to warn you. If I tried to walk, the ground seemed to hold me fast; if I could walk, the water hindered me; and even my cries were smothered in my breast.' So said the poor youth, while recovering from his terror, and reckoning himself happy to see a frightful dream thrust aside by the most delicious reality."

Barbara made every effort to reduce, by her prose, the poetry of her friend to the domain of common life; employing, in the present case, the ingenious craft which so often succeeds with bird-catchers, when they imitate with a whistle the tones of those luckless creatures they soon hope to see by dozens safely lodged in their nets. She praised Wilhelm: she expatiated on his figure, his eyes, his love. The poor girl heard her with a gratified heart, then arose, let herself be dressed, and appeared calmer. "My child, my darling," continued the old woman, in a cozening tone, "I will not trouble you, or injure you: I cannot think of tearing from you your dearest happiness. Could you mistake my intention? Have you forgotten that on all occasions I have cared for you more than for myself? Tell me only what you wish: we shall soon see how it may be brought about."

"What can I wish?" said Mariana; "I am miserable, miserable for life: I love him, and he loves me;

yet I see that I must part with him, and know not how I shall survive it. Norberg is coming, to whom we owe our whole subsistence, whom we cannot live without. Wilhelm is straitened in his fortune: he can do nothing for me."

"Yes, unfortunately, he is of those lovers who bring nothing but their hearts; and these people, too, have the highest pretensions of any."

"No jesting! The unhappy youth thinks of leaving his home, of going upon the stage, of offering me his hand."

"Of empty hands we have already four."

"I have no choice," continued Mariana: "do you decide for me. Cast me away to this side or to that; mark only one thing, — I think I carry in my bosom a pledge that ought to unite me with him still more closely. Consider and determine: whom shall I forsake? whom shall I follow?"

After a short silence, Barbara exclaimed, "Strange that youth should always be for extremes! To my view, nothing would be easier than for us to combine both the profit and the enjoyment. Do you love the one, let the other pay for it: all we have to mind, is being sharp enough to keep the two from meeting."

"Do as you please: I can imagine nothing, but I will obey."

"We have this advantage: we can humour the manager's caprice and pride about the morals of his troop. Both lovers are accustomed already to go secretly and cautiously to work. For hours and opportunity I will take thought: only henceforth you must act the part that I prescribe to you. Who knows what circumstances may arise to help us? If Norberg would arrive even now, when Wilhelm is away! Who can hinder you from thinking of the one in the arms of the other? I wish you a son, and good fortune with him: he will have a rich father."

These projects lightened Mariana's despondency only for a very short time. She could not bring her situation into harmony with her feelings, with her convictions: she would fain have forgotten the painful relations in which she stood, and a thousand little circumstances forced them back every moment to her recollection.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the meantime, Wilhelm had completed the short preliminary journey. His merchant being from home, he delivered the letter of introduction to the mistress of the house. But neither did this lady give him much furtherance in his purposes: she was in a violent passion, and her whole economy was in confusion.

He had not waited long when she disclosed to him, what in truth could not be kept a secret, that her stepdaughter had run off with a player, — a person who had parted lately from a small strolling company, and had stayed in the place, and commenced teaching French. The father, distracted with grief and vexation, had run to the *Amt* to have the fugitives pursued. She blamed her daughter bitterly, and vilified the lover, till she left no tolerable quality with either: she deplored at great length the shame thus brought upon the family; embarrassing our hero not a little, who here felt his own private scheme beforehand judged and punished, in the spirit of prophecy as it were, by this frenzied sibyl. Still stronger and deeper was the interest he took in the sorrows of the father, who now returned from the *Amt*, and with fixed sorrow, in broken sentences, gave his wife an account of the errand, and strove to hide the embarrassment and distraction of his mind; while, after looking at the letter, he directed that the horse it spoke of should be given to Wilhelm.

Our friend thought it best to mount his steed immediately, and quit a house where, in its present state, he could not possibly be comfortable; but the honest man would not allow the son of one to whom he had so

many obligations to depart without tasting of his hospitality, without remaining at least a night beneath his roof.

Wilhelm had partaken of a melancholy supper, worn out a restless night, and hastened, early in the morning, to get rid of these people, who, without knowing it, had, by their narratives and utterances, been constantly wounding him to the quick.

In a musing mood, he was riding slowly along, when all at once he observed a number of armed men coming through the fields. By their long, loose coats, with enormous cuffs; by their shapeless hats, clumsy muskets; by their unpretending gait, and contented bearing of the body, — he recognised in these people a detachment of provincial militia. They halted beneath an old oak, set down their firearms, and placed themselves at their ease upon the sward, to smoke a pipe of tobacco. Wilhelm lingered near them, and entered into conversation with a young man who came up on horseback. The history of the two runaways, which he knew but too well, was again detailed to him, and that with comments not particularly flattering, either to the young pair themselves, or to the parents. He also learned that the military had come hither to take into custody the loving couple, who had already been seized and detained in a neighbouring village. After some time, accordingly, a cart was seen advancing to the place, encircled with a city guard more ludicrous than appalling. An amorphous town clerk rode forth, and made his compliments to the *Actuarius* (for such was the young man Wilhelm had been speaking to), on the border of their several districts, with great conscientiousness and queer grimaces; as perhaps the ghost and the conjurer do, when they meet, the one within the circle and the other out of it, in their dismal midnight operations.

But the chief attention of the lookers-on was directed

to the cart: they could not behold, without compassion, the poor, misguided creatures, who were sitting upon bundles of straw, looking tenderly at one another, and scarcely seeming to observe the bystanders. Accident had forced their conductors to bring them from the last village in that unseemly style; the old chaise, which had previously transported the lady, having there broken down. On that occurrence she had begged for permission to sit beside her friend; whom, in the conviction that his crime was of a capital sort, the rustic bailiffs had so far brought along in irons. These irons certainly contributed to give the tender group a more interesting appearance, particularly as the young man moved and bore himself with great dignity, while he kissed more than once the hands of his fair companion.

"We are unfortunate," she cried to the bystanders, "but not so guilty as we seem. It is thus that cruel men reward true love; and parents, who entirely neglect the happiness of their children, tear them with fury from the arms of joy, when it has found them after many weary days."

The spectators were expressing their sympathy in various ways, when, the officers of law having finished their ceremonial, the cart went on; and Wilhelm, who took a deep interest in the fate of the lovers, hastened forward by a foot-path to get some acquaintance with the *Amtmann* before the procession should arrive. But scarcely had he reached the *Amthaus*, where all was in motion, and ready to receive the fugitives, when his new friend, the *Actuarius*, laid hold of him; and giving him a circumstantial detail of the whole proceedings, and then launching out into a comprehensive eulogy of his own horse, which he had got by barter the night before, put a stop to every other sort of conversation.

The luckless pair, in the meantime, had been set

down behind, at the garden, which communicated by a little door with the *Amthaus*, and thus brought in unobserved. The *Actuarius*, for this mild and handsome treatment, accepted of a just encomium from Wilhelm; though in truth his sole object had been to mortify the crowd collected in front of the *Amthaus*, by denying them the satisfaction of looking at a neighbour in disgrace.

The *Amtmann*, who had no particular taste for such extraordinary occurrences, being wont on these occasions to commit frequent errors, and, with the best intentions, to be often paid with sour admonitions from the higher powers, went with heavy steps into his office room; the *Actuarius* with Wilhelm and a few respectable citizens following him.

The lady was first produced: she advanced without pertness, calm and self-possessed. The manner of her dress, the way in which she bore herself, showed that she was a person not without value in her own eyes. She accordingly began, without any questions being put, to speak, not unskilfully, about her situation.

The *Actuarius* bade her be silent, and held his pen over the folded sheet. The *Amtmann* gathered up his resolution, looked at his assistant, cleared his throat by two or three hems, and asked the poor girl what was her name, and how old she was.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said she, "but it seems very strange to me that you ask my name and age, seeing you know very well what my name is, and that I am just of the age of your oldest son. What you do want to know of me, and need to know, I will tell freely without circumlocution.

"Since my father's second marriage, my situation in his house has not been of the most enviable sort. Oftener than once I have had it in my power to make a suitable marriage, had not my stepmother, dreading the expense of my portion, taken care to thwart all

such proposals. At length I grew acquainted with the young Melina; I felt constrained to love him; and, as we both foresaw the obstacles that stood in the way of our regular union, we determined to go forth together, and seek in the wide world the happiness denied us at home. I took nothing with me that was not my own: we did not run away like thieves and robbers; and my lover does not merit to be hauled about in this way, with chains and handcuffs. The prince is just, and will not sanction such severity. If we are liable to punishment, it is not punishment of this kind."

The old *Amtmann* hereupon fell into double and treble confusion. Sounds of the most gracious eulogies were already humming through his brain, and the girl's voluble speech had entirely confounded the plan of his protocol. The mischief increased, when to repeated official questions she refused giving any answer, but constantly referred to what she had already said.

"I am no criminal," she said. "They have brought me hither on bundles of straw to put me to shame, but there is a higher court that will bring us back to honour."

The *Actuarius*, in the meantime, had kept writing down her words: he whispered the *Amtmann*, "just to go on, — a formal protocol might be made out by and by."

The senior then again took heart, and began, with his heavy words, in dry prescribed formulas, to seek information about the sweet secrets of love.

The red mounted into Wilhelm's cheeks, and those of the pretty criminal likewise glowed with the charming tinge of modesty. She was silent, she stammered, till at last her embarrassment itself seemed to exalt her courage.

"Be assured," she cried, "that I should have strength enough to confess the truth, though it made against myself; and shall I now hesitate and stammer, when

it does me honour? Yes: from the moment when I first felt certain of his love and faith, I looked upon him as my husband; I freely gave him all that love requires, — that a heart once convinced cannot long refuse. Now do with me what you please. If I hesitated for a moment to confess, it was solely owing to fear lest the admission might prove hurtful to my lover."

On hearing this confession, Wilhelm formed a high opinion of the young woman's feelings, while her judges marked her as an impudent strumpet; and the townsfolk present thanked God that in their families no such scandal had occurred, or at least been brought to light.

Wilhelm transported his Mariana into this conjecture, answering at the bar: he put still finer words in her mouth, making her uprightness yet more affecting, her confession still nobler. The most violent desire to help the two lovers took possession of him. Nor did he conceal this feeling, but signified in private to the wavering *Amtmann*, that it were better to end the business; all being clear as possible, and requiring no further investigation.

This was so far of service that the young woman was allowed to retire; though, in her stead, the lover was brought in, his fetters having previously been taken off him at the door. This person seemed a little more concerned about his fate. His answers were more careful; and, if he showed less heroic generosity, he recommended himself by the precision and distinctness of his expressions.

When this audience also was finished, and found to agree in all points with the former, except that, from regard for his mistress, Melina stubbornly denied what had already been confessed by herself, the young woman was again brought forward; and a scene took place between the two, which made the heart of our friend entirely their own.

What usually occurs nowhere but in romances and plays, he saw here in a paltry courtroom before his eyes, — the contest of reciprocal magnanimity, the strength of love in misfortune.

"Is it, then, true," said he internally, "that timorous affection, which conceals itself from the eye of the sun and of men, not daring to taste of enjoyment save in remote solitude and deep secrecy, yet, if torn rudely by some cruel chance into light, will show itself more courageous, strong, and resolute than any of our loud and ostentatious passions?"

To his comfort, the business now soon came to a conclusion. The lovers were detained in tolerable quarters: had it been possible, he would that very evening have brought back the young lady to her parents. For he firmly determined to act as intercessor in this case, and to forward a happy and lawful union between the lovers.

He begged permission of the *Amtmann* to speak in private with Melina, a request which was granted without difficulty.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE conversation of these new acquaintances very soon grew confidential and lively. When Wilhelm told the downcast youth of his connection with the lady's parents, and offered to mediate in the affair, showing at the same time the strongest expectation of success, a light was shed across the dreary and anxious mind of the prisoner: he felt himself already free, already reconciled with the parents of his bride, and now began to speak about his future occupation and support.

"On this point," said our friend, "you cannot long be in difficulty; for you seem to me directed, not more by your circumstances than by nature, to make your fortune in the noble profession you have chosen. A pleasing figure, a sonorous voice, a feeling heart! Could an actor be better furnished? If I can serve you with a few introductions, it will give me the greatest pleasure."

"I thank you with all my heart," replied the other, "but I shall hardly be able to make use of them; for it is my purpose, if possible, not to return to the stage."

"Here you are certainly to blame," said Wilhelm, after a pause, during which he had partly recovered out of his astonishment; for it had never once entered his head, but that the player, the moment his young wife and he were out of durance, would repair to some theatre. It seemed to him as natural and as necessary as for the frog to seek pools of water. He had not doubted of it for a moment, and he now heard the contrary with boundless surprise.

"Yes," replied Melina, "I have it in view not to reappear upon the stage, but rather to take up some civil calling, be it what it will, so that I can but obtain one."

"This is a strange resolution, which I cannot give my approbation to. Without especial reasons, it can never be advisable to change the mode of life we have begun with; and, besides, I know of no condition that presents so much allurement, so many charming prospects, as the condition of an actor."

"It is easy to see that you have never been one," said the other.

"Alas, sir," answered Wilhelm, "how seldom is any man contented with the station where he happens to be placed! He is ever coveting that of his neighbour, from which the neighbour in his turn is longing to be free."

"Yet still there is a difference," said Melina, "between bad and worse. Experience, not impatience, makes me determine as you see. Is there in the world any creature whose morsel of bread is attended with such vexation, uncertainty, and toil? It were almost as good to take the staff and wallet, and beg from door to door. What things to be endured from the envy of rivals, from the partiality of managers, from the ever altering caprices of the public! In truth, one would need to have a hide like a bear's, that is led about in a chain along with apes, and dogs of knowledge, and cudgelled into dancing at the sound of a bagpipe before the populace and children."

Wilhelm thought a thousand things, which he would not vex the worthy man by uttering. He merely, therefore, led the conversation round them at a distance. His friend explained himself the more candidly and circumstantially on that account. "Is not the manager obliged," said he, "to fall down at the feet of every little *Stadtrath*, that he may get permission, for a month between the fairs, to cause another *groschen*

or two to circulate in the place? Ours, on the whole, a worthy man, I have often pitied; though at other times he gave me cause enough for discontentment. A good actor drains him by extortion; of the bad he cannot rid himself; and, should he try to make his income at all equal to his outlay, the public immediately takes umbrage, the house stands empty; and, not to go to wreck entirely, he must continue acting in the midst of sorrow and vexation. No, no, sir! Since you are so good as to undertake to help me, have the kindness, I entreat you, to plead with the parents of my bride: let them get me a little post of clerk or collector, and I shall think myself well dealt with."

After exchanging a few words more, Wilhelm went away with the promise to visit the parents early in the morning, and see what could be done. Scarcely was he by himself, when he gave utterance to his thoughts in these exclamations: "Unhappy Melina! not in thy condition, but in thyself, lies the mean impediment over which thou canst not gain the mastery. What mortal in the world, if without inward calling he takes up a trade, an art, or any mode of life, will not feel his situation miserable? But he who is born with capacities for any undertaking, finds in executing this the fairest portion of his being. Nothing upon earth without its difficulties! It is the secret impulse within, it is the love and the delight we feel, that help us to conquer obstacles, to clear out new paths, and to overleap the bounds of that narrow circle in which others poorly toil. For *thee* the stage is but a few boards: the parts assigned thee are but what a task is to a schoolboy. The spectators thou regardest as on workdays they regard each other. For thee, then, it may be well to wish thyself behind a desk, over ruled ledgers, collecting tolls, and picking out reversions. Thou feelest not the coöperating, co-inspiring whole, which the mind alone can invent, comprehend, and

complete: thou feelest not that in man there lives a spark of purer fire, which, when it is not fed, when it is not fanned, gets covered by the ashes of indifference and daily wants, yet not till late, perhaps never, can be altogether quenched. Thou feelest in thy soul no strength to fan this spark into a flame, no riches in thy heart to feed it when aroused. Hunger drives thee on, inconveniences withstand thee; and it is hidden from thee, that, in every human condition, foes lie in wait for us, invincible except by cheerfulness and equanimity. Thou dost well to wish thyself within the limits of a common station, for what station that required soul and resolution couldst thou rightly fill? Give a soldier, a statesman, a divine, thy sentiments, and as justly will he fret himself about the miseries of *his* condition. Nay, have there not been men so totally forsaken by all feeling of existence, that they have held the life and nature of mortals as a nothing, a painful, short, and tarnished gleam of being? Did the forms of active men rise up living in thy soul; were thy breast warmed by a sympathetic fire; did the vocation which proceeds from within diffuse itself over all thy frame; were the tones of thy voice, the words of thy mouth, delightful to hear; didst thou feel thy own being sufficient for thyself, — then wouldst thou doubtless seek place and opportunity likewise to feel it in others."

Amid such words and thoughts, our friend undressed himself, and went to bed, with feelings of the deepest satisfaction. A whole romance of what he now hoped to do, instead of the worthless occupations which should have filled the approaching day, arose within his mind: pleasant fantasies softly conducted him into the kingdom of sleep, and then gave him up to their sisters, sweet dreams, who received him with open arms, and encircled his reposing head with the images of heaven.

Early in the morning he was awake again, and thinking of the business that lay before him. He revisited the house of the forsaken family, where his presence caused no small surprise. He introduced his proposal in the most prudent manner, and soon found both more and fewer difficulties than he had anticipated. For one thing, the evil was already *done:* and though people of a singularly strict and harsh temper are wont to set themselves forcibly against the past, and thus to increase the evil that cannot now be remedied; yet, on the other hand, what is actually done exerts an irresistible effect upon most minds: an event which lately appeared impossible takes its place, so soon as it has really occurred, with what occurs daily. It was accordingly soon settled, that Herr Melina was to wed the daughter; who, however, in return, because of her misconduct, was to take no marriage portion with her, and to promise that she would leave her aunt's legacy, for a few years more, at an easy interest, in her father's hands. But the second point, touching a civil provision for Melina, was attended with greater difficulties. They liked not to have the luckless pair continually living in their sight: they would not have a present object ever calling to their minds the connection of a mean vagabond with so respectable a family, — a family which could number even a superintendent among its relatives; nay, it was not to be looked for, that the government would trust him with a charge. Both parents were alike inflexible in this matter; and Wilhelm, who pleaded very hard, unwilling that a man whom he contemned should return to the stage, and convinced that he deserved not such a happiness, could not, with all his rhetoric, produce the slenderest impression. Had he known the secret springs of the business, he would have spared himself the labour of attempting to persuade. The father would gladly have kept his daugh-

ter near him; but he hated the young man, because his wife herself had cast an eye upon him: while the latter could not bear to have, in her stepdaughter, a rival constantly before her eyes. So Melina with his young wife, who already manifested no dislike to go and see the world, and be seen of it, was obliged, against his will, to set forth in a few days, and seek some place in any acting company where he could find one.

CHAPTER XV.

HAPPY season of youth! Happy times of the first wish of love! A man is then like a child that can for hours delight itself with an echo, can support alone the charges of conversation, and be well contented with its entertainment, if the unseen interlocutor will but repeat the concluding syllables of the words addressed to it.

So was it with Wilhelm in the earlier and still more in the later period of his passion for Mariana; he transferred the whole wealth of his own emotions to her, and looked upon himself as a beggar that lived upon her alms: and as a landscape is more delightful, nay, is delightful only, when it is enlightened by the sun; so likewise in his eyes were all things beautified and glorified which lay round her or related to her.

Often would he stand in the theatre behind the scenes, to which he had obtained the freedom of access from the manager. In such cases, it is true, the perspective magic was away; but the far mightier sorcery of love then first began to act. For hours he could stand by the sooty light-frame, inhaling the vapour of tallow lamps, looking out at his mistress; and when she returned, and cast a kindly glance upon him, he could feel himself lost in ecstasy; and, though close upon laths and bare spars, he seemed transported into paradise. The stuffed bunches of wool denominated lambs, the waterfalls of tin, the paper roses, and the one-sided huts of straw, awoke in him fair poetic visions of an old pastoral world. Nay, the very dancing-girls, ugly as they were when seen at hand, did not

always inspire him with disgust: they trod the same floor with Mariana. So true is it, that love, which alone can give their full charm to rose-bowers, myrtle-groves, and moonshine, can also communicate, even to shavings of wood, and paper-clippings, the aspect of animated nature. It is so strong a spice, that tasteless or even nauseous soups are by it rendered palatable.

So potent a spice was certainly required to render tolerable, nay, at last agreeable, the state in which he usually found her chamber, not to say herself.

Brought up in a substantial burgher's house, cleanliness and order were the elements in which he breathed; and, inheriting as he did a portion of his father's taste for finery, it had always been his care, in boyhood, to furbish up his chamber, which he regarded as his little kingdom, in the stateliest fashion. His bed-curtains were drawn together in large, massy folds, and fastened with tassels, as they are usually seen in thrones; he had got himself a carpet for the middle of his chamber, and a finer one for his table; his books and apparatus he had, almost instinctively, arranged in such a manner, that a Dutch painter might have imitated them for groups in his still-life scenes. He had a white cap, which he wore straight up like a turban; and the sleeves of his nightgown he had caused to be cut short, in the mode of the Orientals. By way of reason for this, he pretended that long, wide sleeves encumbered him in writing. When, at night, the boy was quite alone, and no longer dreaded any interruption, he usually wore a silk sash tied round his body: and often, it is said, he would fix in his girdle a sword, which he had appropriated from an old armory, and thus repeat and declaim his tragic parts; nay, in the same trim he would kneel down and say his evening prayer.

In those times, how happy did he think the players, whom he saw possessed of so many splendid garments,

trappings, and arms; and in the constant practice of a lofty demeanour, the spirit of which seemed to hold up a mirror of whatever, in the opinions, relations, and passions of men, was stateliest and most magnificent. Of a piece with this, thought Wilhelm, is also the player's domestic life, — a series of dignified transactions and employments, whereof their appearance on the stage is but the outmost portion; like as a mass of silver, long simmering about in the purifying furnace, at length gleams with a bright and beautiful tinge in the eye of the refiner, and shows him, at the same time, that the metal now is cleansed of all foreign mixture.

Great, accordingly, was his surprise at first, when he found himself beside his mistress, and looked down, through the cloud that environed him, on tables, stools, and floor. The wrecks of a transient, light, and false decoration lay, like the glittering coat of a skinned fish, dispersed in wild disorder. The implements of personal cleanliness, — combs, soap, towels, — with the traces of their use, were not concealed. Music, portions of plays and pairs of shoes, washes and Italian flowers, pincushions, hair-skewers, rouge-pots, and ribbons, books and straw hats, — no article despised the neighbourhood of another: all were united by a common element, — powder and dust. Yet as Wilhelm scarcely noticed in her presence aught except herself; nay, as all that had belonged to her, that she had touched, was dear to him, — he came at last to feel, in this chaotic housekeeping, a charm which the proud pomp of his own habitation never had communicated. When, on this hand, he lifted aside her bodice, to get at the harpsichord; on that, threw her gown upon the bed, that he might find a seat; when she herself, with careless freedom, did not seek to hide from him many a natural office, which, out of respect for the presence of a second person, is usually concealed, — he felt as if by all this he was coming nearer to her every

moment, as if the communion betwixt them was fastening by invisible ties.

It was not so easy to reconcile with his previous ideas the behaviour of the other players, whom, on his first visits, he often met with in her house. Ever busied in being idle, they seemed to think least of all on their employment and object: the poetic worth of a piece they were never heard to speak of, or to judge of, right or wrong; their continual question was simply, How much will it *bring?* Is it a stock-piece? How long will it run? How often think you it may be played? and other inquiries and observations of the same description. Then commonly they broke out against the manager, that he was stinted with his salaries, and especially unjust to this one or to that; then against the public, how seldom it recompensed the right man with its approval, how the German theatre was daily improving, how the player was ever growing more honoured, and never could be honoured enough. Then they would descant largely about wine-gardens and coffee-houses; how much debt one of their comrades had contracted, and must suffer a deduction from his wages on account of; about the disproportion of their weekly salaries; about the cabals of some rival company: on which occasions, they would pass again to the great and merited attention which the public now bestowed upon them; not forgetting the importance of the theatre to the improvement of the nation and the world.

All this, which had already given Wilhelm many a restless hour, came again into his memory, as he walked his horse slowly homewards, and contemplated the various occurrences in which he had so lately been engaged. The commotion produced by a girl's elopement, not only in a decent family, but in a whole town, he had seen with his own eyes: the scenes upon the highway and in the *Amthaus*, the views enter-

tained by Melina, and whatever else he had witnessed, again arose before him, and brought his keen, forecasting mind into a sort of anxious disquietude; which no longer to endure, he struck the spurs into his horse, and hastened toward home.

By this expedient, however, he but ran to meet new vexations. Werner, his friend and future brother-in-law, was waiting for him, to begin a serious, important, unexpected conversation.

Werner was one of those tried, sedate persons, with fixed principles and habits, whom we usually denominate cold characters, because on emergencies they do not burst forth quickly or very visibly. Accordingly, his intercourse with Wilhelm was a perpetual contest; which, however, only served to knit their mutual affection the more firmly; for, notwithstanding their very opposite modes of thinking, each found his account in communicating with the other. Werner was very well contented with himself, that he could now and then lay a bridle on the exalted but commonly extravagant spirit of his friend; and Wilhelm often felt a glorious triumph, when the staid and thinking Werner could be hurried on with him in warm ebullience. Thus each exercised himself upon the other; they had been accustomed to see each other daily; and you would have said, their eagerness to meet and talk together had even been augmented by the inability of each to understand the other. At bottom, however, being both good-hearted men, they were both travelling together toward one goal; and they could never understand how it was that neither of the two could bring the other over to his own persuasion.

For some time Werner had observed that Wilhelm's visits had been rarer; that in his favourite discussions he was brief and absent-minded; that he no longer abandoned himself to the vivid depicting of singular conceptions, — tokens by which, in truth, a mind get-

ting rest and contentment in the presence of a friend is most clearly indicated. The considerate and punctual Werner first sought for the root of the evil in his own conduct; till some rumours of the neighbourhood set him on the proper trace, and some unguarded proceedings on the part of Wilhelm brought him nearer to the certainty. He began his investigation, and erelong discovered, that for some time Wilhelm had been openly visiting an actress, had often spoken with her at the theatre, and accompanied her home. On discovering the nightly visits of his friend, Werner's anxiety increased to a painful extent: for he heard that Mariana was a most seductive girl, who probably was draining the youth of his money; while, at the same time, she herself was supported by another and a very worthless lover.

Having pushed his suspicions as near certainty as possible, he had resolved to make a sharp attack on Wilhelm: he was now in full readiness with all his preparations, when his friend returned, discontented and unsettled, from his journey.

That very evening Werner laid the whole of what he knew before him, first calmly, then with the emphatic earnestness of a well-meaning friendship. He left no point of the subject undiscussed, and made Wilhelm taste abundance of those bitter things which men at ease are accustomed, with virtuous spite, to dispense so liberally to men in love. Yet, as might have been expected, he accomplished little. Wilhelm answered with interior commotion, though with great confidence, "You know not the girl! Appearances, perhaps, are not to her advantage; but I am certain of her faithfulness and virtue, as of my love."

Werner maintained his accusations, and offered to bring proofs and witnesses. Wilhelm waived these offers, and parted with his friend out of humour and unhinged, like a man in whose jaw some unskilful

dentist has been seizing a diseased, yet fast-rooted, tooth, and tugging at it harshly to no purpose.

It exceedingly dissatisfied Wilhelm to see the fair image of Mariana overclouded and almost deformed in his soul, first by the capricious fancies of his journey, and then by the unfriendliness of Werner. He adopted the surest means of restoring it to complete brilliancy and beauty, by setting out at night, and hastening to his wonted destination. She received him with extreme joy: on entering the town, he had ridden past her window; she had been expecting his company; and it is easy to conceive that all scruples were soon driven from his heart. Nay, her tenderness again opened up the whole stores of his confidence; and he told her how deeply the public, how deeply his friend, had sinned against her.

Much lively talking led them at length to speak about the earliest period of their acquaintance, the recollection of which forms always one of the most delightful topics between two lovers. The first steps that introduce us to the enchanted garden of love are so full of pleasure, the first prospects so charming, that every one is willing to recall them to his memory. Each party seeks a preference above the other; each has loved sooner, more devotedly; and each, in this contest, would rather be conquered than conquer.

Wilhelm repeated to his mistress, what he had so often told her before, how she soon abstracted his attention from the play, and fixed it on herself; how her form, her acting, her voice, inspired him; how at last he went only on the nights when *she* was to appear; how, in fine, having ventured behind the scenes, he had often stood by her unheeded; and he spoke with rapture of the happy evening when he found an opportunity to do her some civility, and lead her into conversation.

Mariana, on the other hand, would not allow that

she had failed so long to notice him: she declared that she had seen him in the public walk, and for proof she described the clothes which he wore on that occasion; she affirmed that even then he pleased her before all others, and made her long for his acquaintance.

How gladly did Wilhelm credit all this! How gladly did he catch at the persuasion, that, when he used to approach her, she had felt herself drawn toward him by some resistless influence; that she had gone with him between the side-scenes on purpose to see him more closely, and get acquainted with him; and that, in fine, when his backwardness and modesty were not to be conquered, she had herself afforded him an opportunity, and, as it were, compelled him to hand her a glass of lemonade.

In this affectionate contest, which they pursued through all the little circumstances of their brief romance, the hours passed rapidly away; and Wilhelm left his mistress with his heart at peace, and firmly determined on proceeding forthwith to the execution of his project.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE necessary preparations for his journey his father and mother had attended to: some little matters that were yet wanting to his equipage, delayed his departure for a few days. Wilhelm took advantage of this opportunity to write to Mariana, meaning thus to bring to a decision the proposal, about which she had hitherto avoided speaking with him. The letter was as follows:

"Under the kind veil of night, which has often overshadowed us together, I sit and think, and write to thee: all that I meditate and do is solely on thy account. O Mariana! with me, the happiest of men, it is as with a bridegroom who stands in the festive chamber, dreaming of the new universe that is to be unfolded to him, and by means of him, and, while the holy ceremonies are proceeding, transports himself in longing thought before the mysterious curtains, from which the loveliness of love whispers out to him.

"I have constrained myself not to see thee for a few days: the sacrifice was easy, when united with the hope of such a recompense, of being always with thee, of remaining ever thine! Need I repeat what I desire? I must! for it seems as if yet thou hadst never understood me.

"How often, in the low tones of true love, which, though wishing to gain all, dares speak but little, have I sought in thy heart for the desire of a perpetual union. Thou hast understood me, doubtless; for in thy own heart the same wish must have arisen: thou *didst* comprehend me, in that kiss, in the intoxicating

peace of that happy evening. Thy silence testified to me thy modest honour; and how did it increase my love! Another woman would have had recourse to artifice, that she might ripen by superfluous sunshine the purpose of her lover's heart, might elicit a proposal, and secure a firm promise. Mariana, on the contrary, drew back: she repelled the half-opened confidence of him she loved, and sought to conceal her approving feelings by apparent indifference. But I have understood thee! What a miserable creature must I be, if I did not by these tokens recognise the pure and generous love that cares not for itself, but for its object! Confide in me, and fear nothing. We belong to one another; and neither of us leaves aught or forsakes aught, if we live for one another.

"Take it, then, this hand! Solemnly I offer this unnecessary pledge! All the joys of love we have already felt, but there is a new blessedness in the firm thought of duration. Ask not how, — care not. Fate takes care of love, and the more certainly as love is easy to provide for.

"My heart has long ago forsaken my paternal home: it is with thee, as my spirit hovers on the stage. O my darling! to what other man has it been given to unite all his wishes, as it is to me? No sleep falls upon my eyes: like the redness of an everlasting dawn, thy love and thy happiness still glow around me.

"Scarcely can I hold myself from springing up, from rushing forth to thee, and forcing thy consent, and, with the first light of to-morrow, pressing forward into the world for the mark I aim at. But, no! I will restrain myself; I will not act like a thoughtless fool, will do nothing rashly: my plan is laid, and I will execute it calmly.

"I am acquainted with the Manager Serlo: my journey leads me directly to the place where he is. For above a year he has frequently been wishing that

his people had a touch of my vivacity, and my delight in theatrical affairs: I shall doubtless be very kindly received. Into your company I cannot enter, for more than one reason. Serlo's theatre, moreover, is at such a distance from this, that I may there begin my undertaking without any apprehension of discovery. With him I shall thus at once find a tolerable maintenance: I shall look about me in the public, get acquainted with the company, and then come back for thee.

"Mariana, thou seest what I can force myself to do, that I may certainly obtain thee. For such a period not to see thee; for such a period to know thee in the wide world! I dare not view it closely. But yet if I recall to memory thy love, which assures me of all; if thou shalt not disdain my prayer, and give me, ere we part, thy hand, before the priest, — I may then depart in peace. It is but a form between us, yet a form so touching, — the blessing of Heaven to the blessing of the earth. Close by thy house, in the Ritterschaftliche Chapel, the ceremony will be soon and secretly performed.

"For the beginning I have gold enough; we will share it between us; it will suffice for both; and, before that is finished, Heaven will send us more.

"No, my darling, I am not downcast about the issue. What is begun with so much cheerfulness must reach a happy end. I have never doubted that a man may force his way through the world, if he really is in earnest about it; and I feel strength enough within me to provide a liberal support for two, and many more. The world, we are often told, is unthankful: I have never yet discovered that it was unthankful, if one knew how, in the proper way, to do it service. My whole soul burns at the idea, that *I* shall at length step forth, and speak to the hearts of men something they have long been yearning to hear. How many thousand times has a feeling

of disgust passed through me, alive as I am to the nobleness of the stage, when I have seen the poorest creatures fancying they could speak a word of power to the hearts of the people! The tone of a man's voice singing treble sounds far pleasanter and purer to my ear; it is incredible how these blockheads, in their coarse ineptitude, deform things beautiful and venerable.

"The theatre has often been at variance with the pulpit: they ought not, I think, to quarrel. How much is it to be wished, that in both the celebration of nature and of God were entrusted to none but men of noble minds! These are no dreams, my darling! As I have felt in thy heart that thou couldst love, I seize the dazzling thought, and say, — no, I will not say, but I will hope and trust, — that we two shall yet appear to men as a pair of chosen spirits, to unlock their hearts, to touch the recesses of their nature, and prepare for them celestial joys, as surely as the joys I have tasted with thee deserved to be named celestial, since they drew us from ourselves, and exalted us above ourselves.

"I cannot end. I have already said too much, and know not whether I have yet said all, all that concerns *thy* interests; for to express the agitations of the vortex that whirls round within myself, is beyond the power of words.

"Yet take this sheet, my love! I have again read it over: I observe it ought to have begun more cautiously; but it contains in it all that thou hast need to know, — enough to prepare thee for the hour when I shall return with the lightness of love to thy bosom. I seem to myself like a prisoner that is secretly filing his irons asunder. I bid good night to my soundly sleeping parents. Farewell, my beloved, farewell! For this time I conclude; my eyelids have more than once dropped together; it is now deep in the night."

CHAPTER XVII.

It seemed as if the day would never end, while Wilhelm, with the letter beautifully folded in his pocket, longed to meet with Mariana. The darkness had scarcely come on, when, contrary to custom, he glided forth to her house. His plan was, to announce himself for the night; then to quit his mistress for a short time, leaving the letter with her ere he went away; and, returning at a late hour, to obtain her reply, her consent, or to force it from her by the power of his caresses. He flew into her arms, and pressed her in rapture to his bosom. The vehemence of his emotions prevented him at first from noticing, that, on this occasion, she did not receive him with her wonted heartiness; yet she could not long conceal her painful situation, but imputed it to slight indisposition. She complained of a headache, and would not by any means consent to his proposal of coming back that night. Suspecting nothing wrong, he ceased to urge her, but felt that this was not the moment for delivering his letter. He retained it, therefore; and, as several of her movements and observations courteously compelled him to take his leave, in the tumult of unsatiable love he snatched up one of her neckerchiefs, squeezed it into his pocket, and forced himself away from her lips and her door. He returned home, but could not rest there: he again dressed himself, and went out into the open air.

After walking up and down several streets, he was accosted by a stranger inquiring for a certain inn. Wilhelm offered to conduct him to the house. In

the way, his new acquaintance asked about the names of the streets, the owners of various extensive edifices, then about some police regulations of the town; so that, by the time they reached the door of the inn, they had fallen into quite an interesting conversation. The stranger politely compelled his guide to enter, and drink a glass of punch with him. Ere long he had told his name and place of abode, as well as the business that had brought him hither; and he seemed to expect a like confidence from Wilhelm. Our friend, without any hesitation, mentioned his name, and the place where he lived.

"Are you not a grandson of the old Meister, who possessed that beautiful collection of pictures and statues?" inquired the stranger.

"Yes, I am. I was ten years old when my grandfather died, and it grieved me very much to see these fine things sold."

"Your father got a fine sum of money for them."

"You know of it, then?"

"Yes, indeed: I saw that treasure ere it left your house. Your grandfather was not merely a collector, he had a thorough knowledge of art. In his younger happy years he had been in Italy, and had brought back with him such treasures as could not now be got for any price. He possessed some exquisite pictures by the best masters. When you looked through his drawings, you would scarcely have believed your eyes. Among his marbles were some invaluable fragments; his series of bronzes was instructive and well chosen; he had also collected medals, in considerable quantity, relating to history and art; his few gems deserved the greatest praise. In addition to all which, the whole was tastefully arranged; although the rooms and hall of the old house had not been symmetrically built."

"You may conceive," said Wilhelm, "what we young ones lost, when all these articles were taken down and

sent away. It was the first mournful period of my life. I cannot tell you how empty the chambers looked when we saw those objects vanish one by one, which had amused us from our earliest years, and which we considered as unalterable as the house, or the town itself."

"If I mistake not, your father put the capital produced by the sale into some neighbour's stock, with whom he commenced a sort of partnership in trade."

"Quite right; and their joint speculations have prospered in their hands. Within the last twelve years, they have greatly increased their fortunes, and are now the more vehemently bent on gaining. Old Werner also has a son, who suits that sort of occupation much better than I."

"I am sorry the place should have lost such an ornament as your grandfather's cabinet was to it. I saw it but a short time prior to the sale; and I may say, I was myself the cause of its being then disposed of. A rich nobleman, a great amateur, but one who, in such important transactions, does not trust to his own solitary judgment, had sent me hither, and requested my advice. For six days I examined the collection; on the seventh, I advised my friend to pay down the required sum without delay. You were then a lively boy, often running about me: you explained to me the subjects of the pictures, and in general, I recollect, could give a very good account of the whole cabinet."

"I remember such a person, but I should not have recognised him in you."

"It is a good while ago, and we all change more or less. You had, if I mistake not, a favourite piece among them, to which you were ever calling my attention."

"Oh, yes! it represented the history of that king's son dying of a secret love for his father's bride."

"It was not, certainly, the best picture, — badly grouped, of no superiority in colouring, and executed altogether with great mannerism."

"This I did not understand, and do not yet: it is the subject that charms me in a picture, not the art."

"Your grandfather seemed to have thought otherwise. The greater part of his collection consisted of excellent pieces; in which, represent what they might, one constantly admired the talent of the master. This picture of yours had accordingly been hung in the outermost room, — a proof that he valued it slightly."

"It was in that room where we young ones used to play, and where the piece you mention made on me a deep impression; which not even your criticism, greatly as I honour it, could obliterate, if we stood before the picture at this moment. What a melancholy object is a youth that must shut up within himself the sweet impulse, the fairest inheritance which nature has given us, and conceal in his own bosom the fire which should warm and animate himself and others, so that his vitals are wasted away by unutterable pains! I feel a pity for the ill-fated man that would consecrate himself to another, when the heart of that other has already found a worthy object of true and pure affection."

"Such feelings are, however, very foreign to the principles by which a lover of art examines the works of great painters; and most probably you, too, had the cabinet continued in your family, would have by and by acquired a relish for the works themselves, and have learned to see in the performances of art something more than yourself and your individual inclinations."

"In truth, the sale of that cabinet grieved me very much at the time; and often since I have thought of it with regret: but when I consider that it was a necessary means of awakening a taste in me, of developing a talent, which will operate far more powerfully on my history than ever those lifeless pictures could

have done, I easily content myself, and honour destiny, which knows how to bring about what is best for me, and what is best for every one."

"It gives me pain to hear this word destiny in the mouth of a young person, just at the age when men are commonly accustomed to ascribe their own violent inclinations to the will of higher natures."

"You, then, do not believe in destiny? No power that rules over us and directs all for our ultimate advantage?"

"The question is not now of my belief, nor is this the place to explain how I may have attempted to form for myself some not impossible conception of things which are incomprehensible to all of us: the question here is, What mode of viewing them will profit us the most? The fabric of our life is formed of necessity and chance: the reason of man takes its station between them, and may rule them both; it treats the necessary as the groundwork of its being; the accidental it can direct and guide, and employ for its own purposes: and only while this principle of reason stands firm and inexpugnable, does man deserve to be named the god of this lower world. But woe to him who, from his youth, has used himself to search in necessity for something of arbitrary will; to ascribe to chance a sort of reason, which it is a matter of religion to obey. Is conduct like this aught else than to renounce one's understanding, and give unrestricted scope to one's inclinations? We think it is a kind of piety to move along without consideration; to let accidents that please us determine our conduct; and, finally, to bestow on the result of such a vacillating life the name of providential guidance."

"Was it never your case that some little circumstance induced you to strike into a certain path, where some accidental occurrence erelong met you, and a series of unexpected incidents at length brought you to

some point which you yourself had scarcely once contemplated? Should not lessons of this kind teach us obedience to destiny, confidence in some such guide?"

"With opinions like these, no woman could maintain her virtue, no man keep the money in his purse; for occasions enough are occurring to get rid of both. He alone is worthy of respect, who knows what is of use to himself and others, and who labours to control his self-will. Each man has his own fortune in his hands; as the artist has a piece of rude matter, which he is to fashion to a certain shape. But the art of living rightly is like all arts; the capacity alone is born with us; it must be learned, and practised with incessant care."

These discussions our two speculators carried on between them to considerable length: at last they parted without seeming to have wrought any special conviction in each other, but engaging to meet at an appointed place next day.

Wilhelm walked up and down the streets for a time: he heard a sound of clarinets, hunting-horns, and bassoons; it swelled his bosom with delightful feelings. It was some travelling showmen that produced this pleasant music. He spoke with them: for a piece of coin they followed him to Mariana's house. The space in front of the door was adorned with lofty trees; under them he placed his artists; and, himself resting on a bench at some distance, he surrendered his mind without restraint to the hovering tones which floated round him in the cool mellow night. Stretched out beneath the kind stars, he felt his existence like a golden dream. "She, too, hears these flutes," said he within his heart: "she feels whose remembrance, whose love of her, it is that makes the night full of music. In distance, even, we are united by these melodies, as in every separation, by the ethereal accordance of love. Ah! two hearts that love each other are as

two magnetic needles: whatever moves the one must move the other with it; for it is one power that works in both, one principle that pervades them. Can I in her arms conceive the possibility of parting from her? And yet I am soon to be far from her, to seek out a sanctuary for our love, and then to have her ever with me.

"How often, when absent from her, and lost in thoughts about her, happening to touch a book, a piece of dress or aught else, have I thought I felt her hand, so entirely was I invested with her presence! And to recollect those moments which shunned the light of day and the eye of the cold spectator; which, to enjoy, the gods might determine to forsake the painless condition of their pure blessedness! To recollect them! As if by memory we could renew the tumultuous thrilling of that cup of joy, which encircles our senses with celestial bonds, and lifts them beyond all earthly hindrances. And her form" — He lost himself in thoughts of her; his rest passed away into longing; he leaned against a tree, and cooled his warm cheek on its bark; and the winds of the night wafted speedily aside the breath, which proceeded in sighs from his pure and impassioned bosom. He groped for the neckerchief he had taken from her; but it was forgotten, it lay in his other clothes. His frame quivered with emotion.

The music ceased, and he felt as if fallen from the element in which his thoughts had hitherto been soaring. His restlessness increased, as his feelings were no longer nourished and assuaged by the melody. He sat down upon her threshold, and felt more peace. He kissed the brass knocker of her door: he kissed the threshold over which her feet went out and in, and warmed it by the fire of his breast. He again sat still for a moment, and figured her behind her curtains in the white nightgown, with the red ribbon round her

head, in sweet repose: he almost fancied that he was himself so near her, she must needs be dreaming of him. His thoughts were beautiful, like the spirits of the twilight; rest and desire alternated within him; love ran with a quivering hand, in a thousand moods, over all the chords of his soul; it was as if the spheres stood mute above him, suspending their eternal song to watch the low melodies of his heart.

Had he then had about him the master-key with which he used to open Mariana's door, he could not have restrained himself from penetrating into the sanctuary of love. Yet he went away slowly; he slanted, half-dreaming, in beneath the trees, set himself for home, and constantly turned round again; at last, with an effort, he constrained himself, and actually departed. At the corner of the street, looking back yet once, he imagined that he saw Mariana's door open, and a dark figure issue from it. He was too distant for seeing clearly; and, before he could exert himself and look sharply, the appearance was already lost in the night; yet afar off he thought he saw it again gliding past a white house. He stood, and strained his eyes; but, ere he could arouse himself and follow the phantom, it had vanished. Whither should he pursue it? What street had the man taken, if it were a man?

A nightly traveller, when at some turn of his path he has seen the country for an instant illuminated by a flash of lightning, will, with dazzled eyes, next moment, seek in vain for the preceding forms and the connection of his road; so was it in the eyes and the heart of Wilhelm. And as a spirit of midnight, which awakens unutterable terror, is, in the succeeding moments of composure, regarded as a child of imagination, and the fearful vision leaves doubts without end behind it in the soul; so likewise was Wilhelm in extreme disquietude, as, leaning on the corner-stone of

the street, he heeded not the clear gray of the morning, and the crowing of the cocks; till the early trades began to stir, and drove him home.

On his way, he had almost effaced the unexpected delusion from his mind by the most sufficient reasons; yet the fine harmonious feelings of the night, on which he now looked back as if they too had been a vision, were also gone. To soothe his heart, and put the last seal on his returning belief, he took the neckerchief from the pocket of the dress he had been last wearing. The rustling of a letter which fell out of it took the kerchief away from his lips: he lifted and read:

"As I love thee, little fool, what ailed thee last night? This evening I will come again. I can easily suppose that thou art sick of staying here so long: but have patience; at the fair I will return for thee. And observe, never more put me on that abominable black-green-brown jacket: thou lookest in it like the witch of Endor. Did I not send the white nightgown, that I might have a snowy little lambkin in my arms? Send thy letters always by the ancient sibyl: the Devil himself has selected her as Iris."

Book II.

CHAPTER I.

WHOEVER strives in our sight with vehement force to reach an object, be it one that we praise or that we blame, may count on exciting an interest in our minds; but, when once the matter is decided, we turn our eyes away from him: whatever once lies finished and done, can no longer at all fix our attention, especially if we at first prophesied an evil issue to the undertaking.

Therefore we shall not try to entertain our readers with any circumstantial account of the grief and desperation into which our ill-fated friend was cast, when he saw his hopes so unexpectedly and instantaneously ruined. On the contrary, we shall even pass over several years, and again take up our friend, where we hope to find him in some sort of activity and comfort. First, however, we must shortly set forth a few matters necessary for maintaining the connection of our narrative.

The pestilence, or a malignant fever, rages with more fierceness, and speedier effect, if the frame which it attacks was before healthy and full of vigour; and in like manner, when a luckless, unlooked-for fate overtook the wretched Wilhelm, his whole being in a moment was laid waste. As when by chance, in the preparation of some artificial firework, any part of the composition kindles before its time; and the skilfully bored and loaded barrels, which, arranged, and burning after a settled plan, would have painted in the air a magnificently varying series of flaming images, now hissing and roaring, promiscuously explode with a confused and dangerous crash, — so, in our hero's case, did happiness and hope, pleasure and joys, realities

and dreams, clash together with destructive tumult, all at once in his bosom. In such desolate moments, the friend that has hastened to deliverance stands fixed in astonishment; and for him who suffers, it is a benefit that sense forsakes him.

Days of pain, unmixed, ever returning, and purposely renewed, succeeded next: still, even these are to be regarded as a grace from nature. In such hours Wilhelm had not yet quite lost his mistress: his pains were indefatigable struggles, still to hold fast the happiness that was gliding from his soul; again to luxuriate in thought on the possibility of it; to procure a brief after-life for his joys that had departed for ever. Thus one may look upon a body as not utterly dead while the putrefaction lasts; while the forces that in vain seek to work by their old appointment, still labour in dissevering the particles of that frame which they once animated; and not till all is disunited and inert, till we see the whole mouldered down into indifferent dust, — not till then does there rise in us the mournful, vacant sentiment of death, — death, not to be recalled, save by the breath of him that lives for ever.

In a temper so new, so entire, so full of love, there was much to tear asunder, to desolate, to kill; and even the healing force of youth gave nourishment and violence to the power of sorrow. The stroke had extended to the roots of his whole existence. Werner, by necessity his confidant, attacked the hated passion itself with fire and sword, resolutely zealous to search into the monster's inmost life. The opportunity was lucky, the evidence at hand, and many were the histories and narratives with which he backed it out. With such unrelenting vehemence did he make his advances, leaving his friend not even the respite of the smallest momentary self-deception, but treading down every lurking-place in which he might have saved himself from desperation, that Nature, not inclined to

let her darling perish utterly, visited him with sickness, to make an outlet for him on the other side.

A violent fever, with its train of consequences, medicines, overstraining, and exhaustion, besides the unwearied attentions of his family, the love of his brothers and sisters, which first becomes truly sensible in times of distress and want, were so many fresh occupations to his mind, and thus formed a kind of painful entertainment. It was not till he grew better, in other words, till his strength was exhausted, that Wilhelm first looked down with horror into the gloomy abyss of a barren misery, as one looks down into the hollow crater of an extinguished volcano.

He now bitterly reproached himself, that, after so great a loss, he could yet enjoy one painless, restful, indifferent moment. He despised his own heart, and longed for the balm of tears and lamentation.

To awaken these again within him, he would recall to memory the scenes of his bygone happiness. He would paint them to his fancy in the liveliest colours, transport himself again into the days when they were real; and when standing on the highest elevation he could reach, when the sunshine of past times again seemed to animate his limbs and heave his bosom, he would look back into the fearful chasm, would feast his eye on its dismembering depth, then plunge down into its horrors, and thus force from nature the bitterest pains. With such repeated cruelty did he tear himself in pieces; for youth, which is so rich in undeveloped force, knows not what it squanders when, to the anguish which a loss occasions, it adds so many sorrows of its own production, as if it meant then first to give the right value to what is gone for ever. He likewise felt so convinced that his present loss was the sole, the first, the last, he ever could experience in life, that he turned away from every consolation which aimed at showing that his sorrows might be less than endless.

CHAPTER II.

ACCUSTOMED in this way to torment himself, he now also attacked what still remained to him; what next to love, and along with it, had given him the highest joys and hopes, — his talent as a poet and actor, with spiteful criticisms on every side. In his labours he could see nothing but a shallow imitation of prescribed forms, without intrinsic worth: he looked on them as stiff school-exercises, destitute of any spark of nature, truth, or inspiration. His poems now appeared nothing more than a monotonous arrangement of syllables, in which the most trite emotions and thoughts were dragged along and kept together by a miserable rhyme. And thus did he also deprive himself of every expectation, every pleasure, which on this quarter at least might have aided the recovery of his peace.

With the theatric talent it fared no better. He blamed himself for not having sooner detected the vanity on which alone this pretension had been founded. His figure, his gait, his movements, his mode of declamation, were severally taxed: he decisively renounced every species of advantage or merit that might have raised him above the common run of men, and so doing he increased his mute despair to the highest pitch. For, if it is hard to give up a woman's love, no less painful is the task to part from the fellowship of the Muses, to declare ourselves for ever undeserving to be of their community, and to forego the fairest and most immediate kind of approbation, what is openly bestowed on our person, our voice, and our demeanour.

Thus, then, our friend had long ago entirely resigned himself, and set about devoting his powers with the greatest zeal to the business of trade. To the surprise of friends, and to the great contentment of his father, no one was now more diligent than Wilhelm, on the exchange or in the counting-house, in the saleroom or the warehouses: correspondence and calculations, all that was entrusted to his charge, he attended to and managed with the greatest diligence and zeal. Not, in truth, with that warm diligence which to the busy man is its own reward, when he follows with constancy and order the employment he was born for, but with the silent diligence of duty, which has the best principle for its foundation; which is nourished by conviction, and rewarded by conscience; yet which oft, even when the clearest testimony of our minds is crowning it with approbation, can scarcely repress a struggling sigh.

In this manner he lived for a time, assiduously busied, and at last persuaded that his former hard trial had been ordained by fate for the best. He felt glad at having thus been timefully, though somewhat harshly, warned about the proper path of life; while many are constrained to expiate more heavily, and at a later age, the misconceptions into which their youthful inexperience has betrayed them. For each man commonly defends himself as long as possible from casting out the idols which he worships in his soul, from acknowledging a master error, and admitting any truth which brings him to despair.

Determined as he was to abandon his dearest projects, some time was still necessary to convince him fully of his misfortune. At last, however, he had so completely succeeded, by irrefragable reasons, in annihilating every hope of love, or poetical performance, or stage representation, that he took courage to obliterate entirely all the traces of his folly, — all that could in any way remind him of it. For this purpose he had

lit a fire in his chamber, one cool evening, and brought out a little chest of relics, among which were multitudes of small articles, that, in memorable moments, he had begged or stolen from Mariana. Each withered flower brought to his mind the time when it bloomed fresh among her hair; each little note the happy hour to which it had invited him; each ribbon-knot the lovely resting-place of his head, — her beautiful bosom. So occupied, was it not to be expected that each emotion which he thought long since quite dead, should again begin to move? Was it not to be expected that the passion over which, when separated from his mistress, he had gained the victory, should, in the presence of these memorials, again gather strength? We first observe how dreary and disagreeable an overclouded day is when a single sunbeam pierces through, and offers to us the exhilarating splendour of a serene hour.

Accordingly, it was not without disturbance that he saw these relics, long preserved as sacred, fade away from before him in smoke and flame. Sometimes he shuddered and hesitated in his task: he had still a pearl necklace and a flowered neckerchief in his hands, when he resolved to quicken the decaying fire with the poetical attempts of his youth.

Till now he had carefully laid up whatever had proceeded from his pen, since the earliest unfolding of his mind. His papers yet lay tied up in a bundle at the bottom of the chest, where he had packed them; purposing to take them with him in his elopement. How altogether different were his feelings now in opening them, and his feelings then in tying them together!

If we happen, under certain circumstances, to have written and sealed and despatched a letter to a friend, which, however, does not find him, but is brought back to us, and we open it at the distance of some considerable time, a singular emotion is produced in us, on

breaking up our own seal, and conversing with our altered self as with a third person. A similar and deep feeling seized our friend, as he now opened this packet, and threw the scattered leaves into the fire; which was flaming fiercely with its offerings, when Werner entered, expressed his wonder at the blaze, and asked what was the matter.

"I am now giving proof," said Wilhelm, "that I am serious in abandoning a trade for which I was not born." And, with these words, he cast the second packet likewise into the fire. Werner made a motion to prevent him, but the business was already done.

"I cannot see how thou shouldst bring thyself to such extremities," said Werner. "Why must these labours, because they are not excellent, be annihilated?"

"Because either a poem is excellent, or it should not be allowed to exist. Because each man who has no gift for producing first-rate works, should entirely abstain from the pursuit of art, and seriously guard himself against every deception on that subject. For it must be owned, that in all men there is a certain vague desire to imitate whatever is presented to them; and such desires do not prove at all that we possess within us the force necessary for succeeding in these enterprises. Look at boys, how, whenever any rope-dancers have been visiting the town, they go scrambling up and down, and balancing on all the planks and beams within their reach, till some other charm calls them off to other sports, for which perhaps they are as little suited. Hast thou never marked it in the circle of our friends? No sooner does a *dilettante* introduce himself to notice, than numbers of them set themselves to learn playing on his instrument. How many wander back and forward on this bootless way! Happy they who soon detect the chasm that lies between their wishes and their powers!"

Werner contradicted this opinion: their discussion became lively, and Wilhelm could not without emotion employ against his friend the arguments with which he had already so frequently tormented himself. Werner maintained that it was not reasonable wholly to relinquish a pursuit, for which a man had some propensity and talent, merely because he never could succeed in it to full perfection. There were many vacant hours, he said, which might be filled up by it; and then by and by some result might be produced which would yield a certain satisfaction to himself and others.

Wilhelm, who in this matter was of quite a different opinion, here interrupted him, and said with great vivacity:

"How immensely, dear friend, do you err in believing that a work, the first presentation of which is to fill the whole soul, can be produced in broken hours scraped together from other extraneous employment. No: the poet must live wholly for himself, wholly in the objects that delight him. Heaven has furnished him internally with precious gifts; he carries in his bosom a treasure that is ever of itself increasing; he must also live with this treasure, undisturbed from without, in that still blessedness which the rich seek in vain to purchase with their accumulated stores. Look at men, how they struggle after happiness and satisfaction! Their wishes, their toil, their gold, are ever hunting restlessly, — and after what? After that which the poet has received from nature, — the right enjoyment of the world, the feeling of himself in others, the harmonious conjunction of many things that will seldom exist together.

"What is it that keeps men in continual discontent and agitation? It is, that they cannot make realities correspond with their conceptions, that enjoyment steals away from among their hands, that the wished-

for comes too late, and nothing reached and acquired produces on the heart the effect which their longing for it at a distance led them to anticipate. Now, fate has exalted the poet above all this, as if he were a god. He views the conflicting tumult of the passions; sees families and kingdoms raging in aimless commotion; sees those inexplicable enigmas of misunderstanding, which frequently a single monosyllable would suffice to explain, occasioning convulsions unutterably baleful. He has a fellow feeling of the mournful and the joyful in the fate of all human beings. When the man of the world is devoting his days to wasting melancholy, for some deep disappointment, or, in the ebullience of joy, is going out to meet his happy destiny, the lightly moved and all-conceiving spirit of the poet steps forth, like the sun from night to day, and with soft transitions tunes his harp to joy or woe. From his heart, its native soil, springs up the lovely flower of wisdom; and if others, while waking, dream, and are pained with fantastic delusions from their every sense, he passes the dream of life like one awake; and the strangest of incidents is to him a part both of the past and of the future. And thus the poet is at once a teacher, a prophet, a friend of gods and men. What! thou wouldst have him descend from his height to some paltry occupation! He who is fashioned like the bird to hover round the world, to nestle on the lofty summits, to feed on buds and fruits, exchanging gaily one bough for another, *he* ought also to work at the plough like an ox; like a dog to train himself to the harness and draught; or perhaps, tied up in a chain, to guard a farmyard by his barking!"

Werner, it may well be supposed, had listened with the greatest surprise. "All true," he rejoined, "if men were but made like birds, and, though they neither spun nor weaved, could yet spend peaceful days in perpetual enjoyment; if, at the approach of winter

they could as easily betake themselves to distant regions, could retire before scarcity, and fortify themselves against frost."

"Poets have lived so," exclaimed Wilhelm, "in times when true nobleness was better reverenced; and so should they ever live! Sufficiently provided for within, they had need of little from without: the gift of communicating lofty emotions and glorious images to men, in melodies and words that charmed the ear, and fixed themselves inseparably on whatever objects they referred to, of old enraptured the world, and served the gifted as a rich inheritance. At the courts of kings, at the tables of the great, beneath the windows of the fair, the sound of them was heard; while the ear and the soul were shut for all beside: and men felt as we do when delight comes over us, and we stop with rapture if, among the dingles we are crossing, the voice of the nightingale starts out touching and strong. They found a home in every habitation of the world, and the lowliness of their condition but exalted them the more. The hero listened to their songs, and the conqueror of the earth did reverence to a poet; for he felt, that, without poets, his own wild and vast existence would pass away like a whirlwind, and be forgotten for ever. The lover wished that he could feel his longings and his joys so variedly and so harmoniously as the poet's inspired lips had skill to show them forth; and even the rich man could not of himself discern such costliness in his idol grandeurs, as when they were presented to him shining in the splendour of the poet's spirit, sensible to all worth, and exalting all. Nay, if thou wilt have it, who but the poet was it that first formed gods for us, that exalted us to them, and brought them down to us?"

"My friend," said Werner, after some reflection, "it has often grieved me that thou shouldst strive by force to banish from thy soul what thou feelest so vividly.

I am greatly mistaken, if it were not better for thee in some degree to yield to these propensities, than to waste thyself by the contradictions of so hard a piece of self-denial, and with the enjoyment of this one guiltless pleasure to renounce the enjoyment of all others."

"Shall I confess it," said the other, "and wilt not thou laugh at me if I acknowledge, that these ideas pursue me constantly; that, let me flee from them as I will, when I explore my heart, I find all my early wishes yet rooted there, firmly, — nay, more firmly than ever? Yet what now remains for me, wretched as I am? Ah! whoever should have told me that the arms of my spirit, with which I was grasping at infinity, and hoping with certainty to clasp something great and glorious, would so soon be crushed and smote in pieces, — whoever should have told me this, would have brought me to despair. And yet now, when judgment has been passed against me; now, when *she*, that was to be as my divinity to guide me to my wishes, is gone for ever, — what remains but that I yield up my soul to the bitterest woes? O my brother! I will not deceive you: in my secret purposes, she was as the hook on which the ladder of my hopes was fixed. See! With daring aim the mountain adventurer hovers in the air: the iron breaks, and he lies broken and dismembered on the earth. No, there is no hope, no comfort for me more! I will not," he cried out, springing to his feet, "leave a single fragment of these wretched papers from the flames." He then seized one or two packets of them, tore them up, and threw them into the fire. Werner endeavoured to restrain him, but in vain. "Let me alone!" cried Wilhelm: "what should these miserable leaves do here? To me they give neither pleasant recollections nor pleasant hopes. Shall they remain behind to vex me to the end of my life? Shall they perhaps one

day serve the world for a jest, instead of awakening sympathy and horror? Woe to me! my doom is woe! Now I comprehend the wailings of the poets, of the wretched whom necessity has rendered wise. How long did I look upon myself as invulnerable and invincible; and, alas! I am now made to see that a deep and early sorrow can never heal, can never pass away: I feel that I shall take it with me to my grave. No! not a day of my life shall escape this anguish, which at last must crush me down; and *her* image too shall stay with me, shall live and die with me, the image of the worthless, — O my friend! if I must speak the feeling of my heart, — the perhaps not altogether worthless! Her situation, the crookedness of her destiny, have a thousand times excused her in my mind. I have been too cruel; you steeled me in your own cold unrelenting harshness; you held my wavering senses captive, and hindered me from doing for myself and her what I owed to both. Who knows to what a state I may have brought her! my conscience by degrees presents to me, in all its heaviness, in what helplessness, in what despair, I may have left her. Was it not possible that she might clear herself? Was it not possible? How many misconceptions throw the world into perplexity! how many circumstances may extort forgiveness for the greatest fault! Often do I figure her as sitting by herself in silence, leaning on her elbows. 'This,' she says, 'is the faith, the love, he swore to me! With this hard stroke to end the delicious life which made us one!'" He broke out into a stream of tears; while he threw himself down with his face upon the table, and wetted the remaining papers with his weeping.

Werner stood beside him in the deepest perplexity. He had not anticipated this fierce ebullition of feeling. More than once he had tried to interrupt his friend, more than once to lead the conversation elsewhere,

but in vain: the current was too strong for him. It remained that long-suffering friendship should again take up her office. Werner allowed the first shock of sorrow to pass over, while by his silent presence he testified a pure and honest sympathy. And thus they both remained that evening, — Wilhelm sunk in the dull feelings of old sorrows; and the other terrified at this new outbreaking of a passion which he thought his prudent councils and keen persuasion had long since mastered and destroyed.

CHAPTER III.

After such relapses, Wilhelm usually applied himself to business and activity with augmented ardour; and he found it the best means to escape the labyrinth into which he had again been tempted to enter. His attractive way of treating strangers, the ease with which he carried on a correspondence in any living language, more and more increased the hopes of his father and his trading friends, and comforted them in their sorrow for his sickness, — the origin of which had not been known, — and for the pause which had thus interrupted their plan. They determined a second time on Wilhelm's setting out to travel; and we now find him on horseback, with his saddle-bags behind him, exhilarated by the motion and the free air, approaching the mountains, where he had some affairs to settle.

He winded slowly on his path, through dales and over hills, with a feeling of the greatest satisfaction. Overhanging cliffs, roaring brooks, moss-grown rocky walls, deep precipices, he here saw for the first time; yet his earliest dreams of youth had wandered among such regions. In these scenes he felt his age renewed; all the sorrows he had undergone were obliterated from his soul; with unbroken cheerfulness he repeated to himself passages of various poems, particularly of the "Pastor Fido," which, in these solitary places, flocked in crowds into his mind. He also recollected many pieces of his own songs, and recited them with a peculiar contentment. He peopled the world which

lay before him with all the forms of the past, and each step into the future was to him full of augury of important operations and remarkable events.

Several men, who came behind him in succession, and saluted him as they passed by to continue their hasty way into the mountains, by steep footpaths, sometimes interrupted his thoughts without attracting his attention to themselves. At last a communicative traveller joined him, and explained the reason of this general pilgrimage.

"At Hochdorf," he said, "there is a play to be acted to-night; and the whole neighbourhood is gathering to see it."

"What!" cried Wilhelm. "In these solitary hills, among these impenetrable forests, has theatric art sought out a place, and built herself a temple? And I am journeying to her festivities!"

"You will wonder more," said the other, "when you learn by whom the play is to be acted. There is in the place a large manufactory, which employs many people. The proprietor, who lives, so to speak, remote from all human society, can find no better means of entertaining his workmen during winter, than allowing them to act plays. He suffers no cards among them, and wishes also to withdraw them from all coarse rustic practices. Thus they pass the long evenings; and to-day, being the old gentleman's birthday, they are giving a particular festival in honour of him."

Wilhelm came to Hochdorf, where he was to pass the night, and alighted at the manufactory, the proprietor of which stood as a debtor in his list.

When he gave his name, the old man cried in a glad surprise, "Ay, sir, are you the son of that worthy man to whom I owe so many thanks, — so long have owed money? Your good father has had so much patience with me, I should be a knave if I did not pay

you speedily and cheerfully. You come at the proper time to see that I am fully in earnest about it."

He then called out his wife, who seemed no less delighted than himself to see the youth: she declared that he was very like his father, and lamented, that, having such a multitude of guests already in the house, she could not lodge him for the night.

The account was clear, and quickly settled: Wilhelm put the roll of gold into his pocket, and wished that all his other business might go on so smoothly. At last the play-hour came: they now waited nothing but the coming of the head forester, who at length also arrived, entered with a few hunters, and was received with the greatest reverence.

The company was then led into the playhouse, formed out of a barn that lay close upon the garden. Without any extraordinary taste, both seats and stage were yet decked out in a cheerful and pretty way. One of the painters employed in the manufactory had formerly worked as an understrapper at the prince's theatre: he had now represented woods and streets and chambers, somewhat rudely, it is true, yet so as to be recognised for such. The play itself they had borrowed from a strolling company, and shaped it aright, according to their own ideas. As it was, it did not fail to yield some entertainment. The plot of two lovers wishing to carry off a girl from her guardian, and mutually from one another, produced a great variety of interesting situations. Being the first play our friend had witnessed for so long a time, it suggested several reflections to him. It was full of action, but without any true delineation of character. It pleased and delighted. Such are always the beginnings of the scenic art. The rude man is contented if he see but something going on; the man of more refinement must be made to feel; the man entirely refined, desires to reflect.

The players he would willingly have helped here and there, for a very little would have made them greatly better.

His silent meditations were somewhat broken in upon by the tobacco-smoke, which now began to rise in great and greater copiousness. Soon after the commencement of the play, the head forester had lit his pipe: by and by others took the same liberty. The large dogs, too, which followed these gentlemen, introduced themselves in no pleasant style. At first they had been bolted out; but, soon finding the back-door passage, they entered on the stage, ran against the actors, and at last, jumping over the orchestra, joined their masters, who had taken up the front seats in the pit.

For afterpiece an oblation was represented. A portrait of the old gentleman in his bridegroom dress stood upon an altar, hung with garlands. All the players paid their reverence to it in the most submissive postures. The youngest child came forward dressed in white, and made a speech in verse; by which the whole family, and even the head forester himself, whom it brought in mind of his own children, were melted into tears. Thus ended the play; and Wilhelm could not help stepping on the stage, to have a closer view of the actresses, to praise them for their good performance, and give them a little counsel for the future.

The remaining business, which our friend in the following days had to transact in various quarters of the hill-country, was not all so pleasant, or so easy to conclude with satisfaction. Many of his debtors entreated for delay, many were uncourteous, many lied. In conformity with his instructions, he had to sue some of them at law: he was thus obliged to seek out advocates, and give instructions to them, to appear before judges, and go through many other sorry duties of the same sort.

His case was hardly bettered when people chanced to incline showing some attention to him. He found very few that could any way instruct him, few with whom he could hope to establish a useful commercial correspondence. Unhappily, moreover, the weather now grew rainy; and travelling on horseback in this district came to be attended with insufferable difficulties. He therefore thanked his stars on again getting near the level country; and at the foot of the mountains, looking out into a fertile and beautiful plain, intersected by a smooth-flowing river, and seeing a cheerful little town lying on its banks, all glittering in the sunshine, he resolved, though without any special business in the place, to pass a day or two there, that he might refresh both himself and his horse, which the bad roads had considerably injured.

CHAPTER IV.

On alighting at an inn, upon the market-place, he found matters going on very joyously, — at least very stirringly. A large company of rope-dancers, leapers, and jugglers, having a strong man along with them, had just arrived with their wives and children, and, while preparing for a grand exhibition, kept up a perpetual racket. They first quarrelled with the landlord, then with one another; and, if their contention was intolerable, the expressions of their satisfaction were infinitely more so. Undetermined whether he should go or stay, he was standing in the door looking at some workmen, who had just begun to erect a stage in the middle of the square.

A girl with roses and other flowers for sale, coming by, held out her basket to him, and he purchased a beautiful nosegay; which, like one that had a taste for these things, he tied up in a different fashion, and was looking at it with a satisfied air, when the window of another inn on the opposite side of the square flew open, and a handsome woman looked out from it. Notwithstanding the distance, he observed that her face was animated by a pleasant cheerfulness; her fair hair fell carelessly streaming about her neck; she seemed to be looking at the stranger. In a short time afterward, a boy with a white jacket, and a barber's apron on, came out from the door of her house toward Wilhelm, saluted him, and said, "The lady at the window bids me ask if you will not favour her with a share of your beautiful flowers." "They are all at her service," answered

Wilhelm, giving the nosegay to this nimble messenger, and making a bow to the fair one, who returned it with a friendly courtesy, and then withdrew from the window.

Amused with this small adventure, he was going up-stairs to his chamber, when a young creature sprang against him, and attracted his attention. A short silk waistcoat with slashed Spanish sleeves, tight trousers with puffs, looked very pretty on the child. Its long black hair was curled, and wound in locks and plaits about the head. He looked at the figure with astonishment, and could not determine whether to take it for a boy or a girl. However, he decided for the latter; and, as the child ran by, he took her up in his arms, bade her good day, and asked her to whom she belonged; though he easily perceived that she must be a member of the vaulting and dancing company lately arrived. She viewed him with a dark, sharp side-look, as she pushed herself out of his arms, and ran into the kitchen without making any answer.

On coming up-stairs, he found in the large parlour two men practising the small sword, or seeming rather to make trial which was the better fencer. One of them plainly enough belonged to the vaulting company: the other had a somewhat less savage aspect. Wilhelm looked at them, and had reason to admire them both; and as the black-bearded, sturdy contender soon afterward forsook the place of action, the other with extreme complaisance offered Wilhelm the rapier.

"If you want to take a scholar under your inspection," said our friend, "I am well content to risk a few passes with you."

Accordingly they fought together; and, although the stranger greatly overmatched his new competitor, he politely kept declaring that it all depended upon practice: in fact, Wilhelm, inferior as he was, had made

it evident that he had got his first instructions from a good, solid, thorough-paced German fencing-master.

Their entertainment was disturbed by the uproar with which the party-coloured brotherhood issued from the inn, to make proclamation of the show, and awaken a desire to see their art, throughout the town. Preceded by a drum, the manager advanced on horseback: he was followed by a female dancer mounted on a corresponding hack, and holding a child before her, all bedizened with ribbons and spangles. Next came the remainder of the troop on foot, some of them carrying children on their shoulders in dangerous postures, yet smoothly and lightly: among these the young, dark, black-haired figure again attracted Wilhelm's notice.

Pickleherring ran gaily up and down the crowded multitude, distributing his handbills with much practical fun, — here smacking the lips of a girl, there breeching a boy, and awakening generally among the people an invincible desire to know more of him.

On the painted flags, the manifold science of the company was visibly delineated, particularly of the Monsieur Narciss and the Demoiselle Landrinette: both of whom, being main characters, had prudently kept back from the procession, thereby to acquire a more dignified consideration, and excite a greater curiosity.

During the procession, Wilhelm's fair neighbour had again appeared at the window; and he did not fail to inquire about her of his new companion. This person, whom for the present we shall call Laertes, offered to take Wilhelm over and introduce him. "I and the lady," said he laughing, "are two fragments of an acting company that made shipwreck here a short while ago. The pleasantness of the place has induced us to stay in it, and consume our little stock of cash in peace; while one of our friends is out seeking some situation for himself and us."

Laertes immediately accompanied his new acquaintance to Philina's door; where he left him for a moment, and ran to a shop hard by for a few sweetmeats. "I am sure you will thank me," said he, on returning, "for procuring you so pleasant an acquaintance."

The lady came out from her room, in a pair of tight little slippers with high heels, to give them welcome. She had thrown a black mantle over her, above a white *negligée*, not indeed superstitiously clean; which, however, for that very reason, gave her a more frank and domestic air. Her short dress did not hide a pair of the prettiest feet and ankles in the world.

"You are welcome," she cried to Wilhelm, "and I thank you for your charming flowers." She led him into her chamber with the one hand, pressing the nosegay to her breast with the other. Being all seated, and got into a pleasant train of general talk, to which she had the art of giving a delightful turn, Laertes threw a handful of gingerbread-nuts into her lap; and she immediately began to eat them.

"Look what a child this young gallant is!" she said: "he wants to persuade you that I am fond of such confectionery, and it is himself that cannot live without licking his lips over something of the kind."

"Let us confess," replied Laertes, "that in this point, as in others, you and I go hand in hand. For example," he continued, "the weather is delightful today: what if we should take a drive into the country, and eat our dinner at the Mill?"

"With all my heart," said Philina: "we must give our new acquaintance some diversion."

Laertes sprang out, for he never walked: and Wilhelm motioned to return for a minute to his lodgings, to have his hair put in order; for at present it was all dishevelled with riding. "You can do it here," she said, then called her little servant, and con-

strained Wilhelm in the politest manner to lay off his coat, to throw her powder-mantle over him, and to have his head dressed in her presence. "We must lose no time," said she: "who knows how short a while we may all be together?"

The boy, out of sulkiness and ill nature more than want of skill, went on but indifferently with his task: he pulled the hair with his implements, and seemed as if he would not soon be done. Philina more than once reproved him for his blunders, and at last sharply packed him off, and chased him to the door. She then undertook the business herself, and frizzled Wilhelm's locks with great dexterity and grace; though she, too, appeared to be in no exceeding haste, but found always this and that to improve and put to rights; while at the same time she could not help touching his knees with hers, and holding her nosegay and bosom so near his lips, that he was strongly tempted more than once to imprint a kiss on it.

When Wilhelm had cleaned his brow with a little powder-knife, she said to him, "Put it in your pocket, and think of me when you see it." It was a pretty knife: the haft, of inlaid steel, had these friendly words wrought on it, "Think of me." Wilhelm put it up, and thanked her, begging permission at the same time to make her a little present in return.

At last they were in readiness. Laertes had brought round the coach, and they commenced a very gay excursion. To every beggar, Philina threw out money from the window; giving along with it a merry and friendly word.

Scarcely had they reached the Mill, and ordered dinner, when a strain of music struck up before the house. It was some miners singing various pretty songs, and accompanying their clear and shrill voices with a cithern and triangle. In a short while the gathering crowd had formed a ring about them, and

our company nodded approbation to them from the windows. Observing this attention, they expanded their circle, and seemed making preparation for their grandest piece. After some pause, a miner stepped forward with a mattock in his hand; and, while the others played a serious tune, he set himself to represent the action of digging.

Ere long a peasant came from among the crowd, and, by pantomimic threats, let the former know that he must cease and remove. Our company were greatly surprised at this: they did not discover that the peasant was a miner in disguise, till he opened his mouth, and, in a sort of recitative, rebuked the other for daring to meddle with his field. The latter did not lose his composure of mind, but began to inform the husbandman about his right to break ground there; giving him withal some primary conceptions of mineralogy. The peasant, not being master of his foreign terminology, asked all manner of silly questions: whereat the spectators, as themselves more knowing, set up many a hearty laugh. The miner endeavoured to instruct him, and showed him the advantage, which, in the long run, would reach even him, if the deep-lying treasures of the land were dug out from their secret beds. The peasant, who at first had threatened his instructor with blows, was gradually pacified; and they parted good friends at last, though it was the miner chiefly that got out of this contention with honour.

"In this little dialogue," said Wilhelm, when seated at the table, "we have a lively proof how useful the theatre might be to all ranks; what advantage even the state might procure from it, if the occupations, trades, and undertakings of men were brought upon the stage, and presented on their praiseworthy side, in that point of view in which the state itself should honour and protect them. As matters stand, we exhibit

only the ridiculous side of men: the comic poet is, as it were, but a spiteful tax-gatherer, who keeps a watchful eye over the errors of his fellow subjects, and seems gratified when he can fix any charge upon them. Might it not be a worthy and pleasing task for a statesman to survey the natural and reciprocal influence of all classes on each other, and to guide some poet, gifted with sufficient humour, in such labours as these? In this way, I am persuaded, many very entertaining, both agreeable and useful, pieces, might be executed."

"So far," said Laertes, "as I, in wandering about the world, have been able to observe, statesmen are accustomed merely to forbid, to hinder, to refuse, but very rarely to invite, to further, to reward. They let all things go along, till some mischief happens: then they get into a rage, and lay about them."

"A truce with state and statesmen!" said Philina: "I cannot form a notion of statesmen except in periwigs; and a periwig, wear it who will, always gives my fingers a spasmodic motion: I could like to pluck it off the venerable gentleman, to skip up and down the room with it, and laugh at the bald head."

So, with a few lively songs, which she could sing very beautifully, Philina cut short their conversation, and urged them to a quick return homewards, that they might arrive in time for seeing the performance of the rope-dancers in the evening. On the road back she continued her lavish generosity, in a style of gaiety reaching to extravagance; for at last, every coin belonging to herself or her companions being spent, she threw her straw hat from the window to a girl, and her neckerchief to an old woman, who asked her for alms.

Philina invited both of her attendants to her own apartments, because, she said, the spectacle could be seen more conveniently from her windows than from theirs.

On arriving, they found the stage set up, and the background decked with suspended carpets. The swing-boards were already fastened, the slack-rope fixed to posts, the tight-rope bound over trestles. The square was moderately filled with people, and the windows with spectators of some quality.

Pickleherring, with a few insipidities, at which the lookers-on are generally kind enough to laugh, first prepared the meeting to attention and good humour. Some children, whose bodies were made to exhibit the strangest contortions, awakened astonishment or horror; and Wilhelm could not, without the deepest sympathy, see the child he had at the first glance felt an interest in, go through her fantastic positions with considerable difficulty. But the merry tumblers soon changed the feeling into that of lively satisfaction, when they first singly, then in rows, and at last all together, vaulted up into the air, making somersets backwards and forwards. A loud clapping of hands and a strong huzza echoed from the whole assembly.

The general attention was next directed to quite a different object. The children in succession had to mount the rope, — the learners first, that by practising they might prolong the spectacle, and show the difficulties of the art more clearly. Some men and full-grown women likewise exhibited their skill to moderate advantage; but still there was no Monsieur Narciss, no Demoiselle Landrinette.

At last this worthy pair came forth: they issued from a kind of tent with red spread curtains, and, by their agreeable forms and glittering decorations, fulfilled the hitherto increasing hopes of the spectators. He, a hearty knave, of middle stature, with black eyes and a strong head of hair; she, formed with not inferior symmetry, — exhibited themselves successively upon the rope, with delicate movements, leaping, and singular postures. Her airy lightness, his audacity;

the exactitude with which they both performed their feats of art, — raised the universal satisfaction higher at every step and spring. The stateliness with which they bore themselves, the seeming attentions of the rest to them, gave them the appearance of king and queen of the whole troop; and all held them worthy of the rank.

The animation of the people spread to the spectators at the windows: the ladies looked incessantly at Narciss, the gentlemen at Landrinette. The populace hurrahed, the more cultivated public could not keep from clapping of the hands: Pickleherring now could scarcely raise a laugh. A few, however, slunk away when some members of the troop began to press through the crowd with their tin plates to collect money.

"They have made their purpose good, I imagine," said Wilhelm to Philina, who was leaning over the window beside him. "I admire the ingenuity with which they have turned to advantage even the meanest parts of their performance: out of the unskilfulness of their children, and exquisiteness of their chief actors, they have made up a whole which at first excited our attention, and then gave us very fine entertainment."

The people by degrees dispersed; and the square was again become empty, while Philina and Laertes were disputing about the forms and the skill of Narciss and Landrinette, and rallying each other on the subject at great length. Wilhelm noticed the wonderful child standing on the street near some other children at play: he showed her to Philina, who, in her lively way, immediately called and beckoned to the little one, and, this not succeeding, tripped singing downstairs, and led her up by the hand.

"Here is the enigma," said she, as she brought her to the door. The child stood upon the threshold, as if she meant again to run off; laid her right hand on

her breast, the left on her brow, and bowed deeply. "Fear nothing, my little dear," said Wilhelm, rising, and going toward her. She viewed him with a doubting look, and came a few steps nearer.

"What is thy name?" he asked. "They call me Mignon." "How old art thou?" "No one has counted." "Who was thy father?" "The Great Devil is dead."

"Well! this is singular enough," said Philina. They asked her a few more questions: she gave her answers in a kind of broken German, and with a strangely solemn manner; every time laying her hands on her breast and brow, and bowing deeply.

Wilhelm could not satisfy himself with looking at her. His eyes and his heart were irresistibly attracted by the mysterious condition of this being. He reckoned her about twelve or thirteen years of age: her body was well formed, only her limbs gave promise of a stronger growth, or else announced a stunted one. Her countenance was not regular, but striking; her brow full of mystery; her nose extremely beautiful; her mouth, although it seemed too closely shut for one of her age, and though she often threw it to a side, had yet an air of frankness, and was very lovely. Her brownish complexion could scarcely be discerned through the paint. This form stamped itself deeply in Wilhelm's soul: he kept looking at her earnestly, and forgot the present scene in the multitude of his reflections. Philina waked him from his half-dream, by holding out the remainder of her sweetmeats to the child, and giving her a sign to go away. She made her little bow as formerly, and darted like lightning through the door.

As the time drew on when our new friends had to part for the evening, they planned a fresh excursion for the morrow. They purposed now to have their dinner at a neighbouring *Jägerhaus*. Before taking leave of Laertes, Wilhelm said many things in Philina's

praise, to which the other made only brief and careless answers.

Next morning, having once more exercised themselves in fencing for an hour, they went over to Philina's lodging, toward which they had seen their expected coach passing by. But how surprised was Wilhelm, when the coach seemed altogether to have vanished; and how much more so, when Philina was not to be found at home! She had placed herself in the carriage, they were told, with a couple of strangers who had come that morning, and was gone with them. Wilhelm had been promising himself some pleasant entertainment from her company, and could not hide his irritation. Laertes, on the other hand, but laughed at it, and cried, "I love her for this: it looks so like herself! Let us, however, go directly to the *Jägerhaus:* be Philina where she pleases, we will not lose our promenade on her account."

As Wilhelm, while they walked, continued censuring the inconsistency of such conduct, Laertes said, "I cannot reckon it inconsistent so long as one keeps faithful to his character. If this Philina plans you anything, or promises you anything, she does it under the tacit condition that it shall be quite convenient for her to fulfil her plan, to keep her promise. She gives willingly, but you must ever hold yourself in readiness to return her gifts."

"That seems a singular character," said Wilhelm.

"Anything but singular: only she is not a hypocrite. I like her on that account. Yes: I am her friend, because she represents the sex so truly, which I have so much cause to hate. To me she is another genuine Eve, the great mother of womankind: so are they all, only they will not all confess it."

With abundance of such talk, in which Laertes very vehemently exhibited his spleen against the fair sex, without, however, giving any cause for it, they arrived

at the forest; into which Wilhelm entered in no joyful mood, the speeches of Laertes having again revived in him the memory of his relation to Mariana. Not far from a shady well, among some old and noble trees, they found Philina sitting by herself at a stone table. Seeing them, she struck up a merry song; and, when Laertes asked for her companions, she cried out, "I have already cozened them: I have already had my laugh at them, and sent them a-travelling, as they deserved. By the way hither I had put to proof their liberality; and, finding that they were a couple of your close-fisted gentry, I immediately determined to have amends of them. On arriving at the inn, they asked the waiter what was to be had. He, with his customary glibness of tongue, reckoned over all that could be found in the house, and more than could be found. I noticed their perplexity: they looked at one another, stammered, and inquired about the cost. 'What is the use of all this studying?' said I. 'The table is the lady's business: allow me to manage it.' I immediately began ordering a most unconscionable dinner, for which many necessary articles would require to be sent for from the neighbourhood. The waiter, of whom, by a wry mouth or two, I had made a confidant, at last helped me out; and so, by the image of a sumptuous feast, we tortured them to such a degree that they fairly determined on having a walk in the forest, from which I imagine we shall look with clear eyes if we see them come again. I have laughed a quarter of an hour for my own behoof; I shall laugh for ever when I think of the looks they had." At table, Laertes told of similar adventures: they got into the track of recounting ludicrous stories, mistakes, and dexterous cheats.

A young man of their acquaintance, from the town, came gliding through the wood with a book in his hand: he sat down by them, and began praising the

"'I shall laugh for ever'"

Photogravure from the painting by W. Friedrich

beauty of the place. He directed their attention to the murmuring of the brook, to the waving of the boughs, to the checkered lights and shadows, and the music of the birds. Philina commenced a little song of the cuckoo, which did not seem at all to exhilarate the man of taste: he very soon made his compliments, and went on.

"Oh that I might never hear more of nature, and scenes of nature!" cried Philina, so soon as he was gone: "there is nothing in the world more intolerable than to hear people reckon up the pleasures you enjoy. When the day is bright you go to walk, as to dance when you hear a tune played. But who would think a moment on the music or the weather? It is the dancer that interests us, not the violin; and to look upon a pair of bright black eyes is the life of a pair of blue ones. But what on earth have we to do with wells and brooks, and old rotten lindens?" She was sitting opposite to Wilhelm; and, while speaking so, she looked into his eyes with a glance which he could not hinder from piercing at least to the very door of his heart.

"You are right," replied he, not without embarrassment: "man is ever the most interesting object to man, and perhaps should be the only one that interests. Whatever else surrounds us is but the element in which we live, or else the instrument which we employ. The more we devote ourselves to such things, the more we attend to and feel concern in them, the weaker will our sense of our own dignity become, the weaker our feelings for society. Men who put a great value on gardens, buildings, clothes, ornaments, or any other sort of property, grow less social and pleasant: they lose sight of their brethren, whom very few can succeed in collecting about them and entertaining. Have you not observed it on the stage? A good actor makes us very soon forget the awkwardness

and meanness of paltry decorations, but a splendid theatre is the very thing which first makes us truly feel the want of proper actors.

After dinner Philina sat down among the long, overshaded grass, and commanded both her friends to fetch her flowers in great quantities. She wreathed a complete garland, and put it round her head: it made her look extremely charming. The flowers were still sufficient for another: this, too, she plaited, while both the young men sat beside her. When, at last, amid infinite mirth and sportfulness, it was completed, she pressed it on Wilhelm's head with the greatest dignity, and shifted the posture of it more than once, till it seemed to her properly adjusted. "And I, it appears, must go empty," said Laertes.

"Not by any means: you shall not have reason to complain," replied Philina, taking off the garland from her own head, and putting it on his.

"If we were rivals," said Laertes, "we might now dispute very warmly which of us stood higher in thy favour."

"And the more fools you," said she, while she bent herself toward him, and offered him her lips to kiss; and then immediately turned round, threw her arm about Wilhelm, and bestowed a kind salute on him also. "Which of them tastes best?" said she archly.

"Surprisingly!" exclaimed Laertes: "it seems as if nothing else had ever such a tang of wormwood in it."

"As little wormwood," she replied, "as any gift that a man may enjoy without envy and without conceit. But now," she cried, "I should like to have an hour's dancing; and after that we must look to our vaulters."

Accordingly, they went into the house, and there found music in readiness. Philina was a beautiful dancer: she animated both her companions. Nor was Wilhelm without skill; but he wanted careful prac-

tice, a defect which his two friends voluntarily took charge of remedying.

In these amusements the time passed on insensibly. It was already late when they returned. The rope-dancers had commenced their operations. A multitude of people had again assembled in the square; and our friends, on alighting, were struck by the appearance of a tumult in the crowd, occasioned by a throng of men rushing toward the door of the inn, which Wilhelm had now turned his face to. He sprang forward to see what it was; and, pressing through the people, he was struck with horror to observe the master of the rope-dancing company dragging poor Mignon by the hair out of the house, and unmercifully beating her little body with the handle of a whip.

Wilhelm darted on the man like lightning, and seized him by the collar. "Quit the child!" he cried, in a furious tone, "or one of us shall never leave this spot!" and, so speaking, he grasped the fellow by the throat with a force which only rage could have lent him. The showman, on the point of choking, let go the child, and endeavoured to defend himself against his new assailant. But some people, who had felt compassion for Mignon, yet had not dared to begin a quarrel for her, now laid hold of the rope-dancer, wrenched his whip away, and threatened him with great fierceness and abuse. Being now reduced to the weapons of his mouth, he began bullying, and cursing horribly. The lazy, worthless urchin, he said, would not do her duty; refused to perform the egg-dance, which he had promised to the public; he would beat her to death, and no one should hinder him. He tried to get loose, and seek the child, who had crept away among the crowd. Wilhelm held him back, and said sternly, "You shall neither see nor touch her, till you have explained before a magistrate where you stole

her. I will pursue you to every extremity. You shall not escape me." These words, which Wilhelm uttered in heat, without thought or purpose, out of some vague feeling, or, if you will, out of inspiration, soon brought the raging showman to composure. "What have I to do with the useless brat?" cried he. "Pay me what her clothes cost, and make of her what you please. We shall settle it to-night." And, being liberated, he made haste to resume his interrupted operations, and to calm the irritation of the public by some striking displays of his craft.

As soon as all was still again, Wilhelm commenced a search for Mignon, whom, however, he could nowhere find. Some said they had seen her on the street, others on the roofs of the adjoining houses; but, after seeking unsuccessfully in all quarters, he was forced to content himself, and wait to see if she would not again turn up of herself.

In the meantime, Narciss had come into the house; and Wilhelm set to question him about the birthplace and history of the child. Monsieur Narciss knew nothing about these things, for he had not long been in the company; but in return he recited, with much volubility and levity, various particulars of his own fortune. Upon Wilhelm's wishing him joy of the great approbation he had gained, Narciss expressed himself as if exceedingly indifferent on that point. "People laugh at us," he said, "and admire our feats of skill; but their admiration does nothing for us. The master has to pay us, and may raise the funds where he pleases." He then took his leave, and was setting off in great haste.

At the question, whither he was bent so fast, the dog gave a smile, and admitted that his figure and talents had acquired for him a more solid species of favour than the huzzaing of the multitude. He had been invited by some young ladies, who desired much

to become acquainted with him; and he was afraid it would be midnight before he could get all his visits over. He proceeded with the greatest candour to detail his adventures. He would have given the names of his patronesses, their streets and houses, had not Wilhelm waived such indiscretion, and politely dismissed him.

Laertes had meanwhile been entertaining Landrinette: he declared that she was fully worthy to be and to remain a woman.

Our friend next proceeded to his bargain with the showman for Mignon. Thirty crowns was the price set upon her; and for this sum the black-bearded, hot Italian entirely surrendered all his claims: but of her history or parentage he would discover nothing, only that she had fallen into his hands at the death of his brother, who, by reason of his admirable skill, had usually been named the "Great Devil."

Next morning was chiefly spent in searching for the child. It was in vain that they rummaged every hole and corner of the house and neighbourhood: the child had vanished; and Wilhelm was afraid she might have leaped into some pool of water, or destroyed herself in some other way.

Philina's charms could not divert his inquietude. He passed a dreary, thoughtful day. Nor at evening could the utmost efforts of the tumblers and dancers, exerting all their powers to gratify the public, divert the current of his thoughts, or clear away the clouds from his mind.

By the concourse of people flocking from all places round, the numbers had greatly increased on this occasion: the general approbation was like a snowball rolling itself into a monstrous size. The feat of leaping over swords, and through the cask with paper ends, made a great sensation.

The strong man, too, produced a universal feeling of

mingled astonishment and horror, when he laid his head and feet on a couple of separate stools and then allowed some sturdy smiths to place a stithy on the unsupported part of his body, and hammer a horseshoe till it was completely made by means of it.

The Hercules' Strength, as they called it, was a no less wonderful affair. A row of men stood up; then another row, upon their shoulders; then women and young lads, supported in like manner on the second row; so that finally a living pyramid was formed; the peak being ornamented by a child, placed on its head, and dressed out in the shape of a ball and weather-vane. Such a sight, never witnessed in those parts before, gave a worthy termination to the whole performance. Narciss and Landrinette were then borne in litters, on the shoulders of the rest, along the chief streets of the town, amid the triumphant shouts of the people. Ribbons, nosegays, silks, were thrown upon them: all pressed to get a sight of them. Each thought himself happy if he could behold them, and be honoured with a look of theirs.

"What actor, what author, nay, what man of any class, would not regard himself as on the summit of his wishes, could he, by a noble saying or a worthy action, produce so universal an impression? What a precious emotion would it give, if one could disseminate generous, exalted, manly feelings with electric force and speed, and rouse assembled thousands into such rapture, as these people, by their bodily alertness, have done! If one could communicate to thronging multitudes a fellow-feeling in all that belongs to man, by the portraying of happiness and misery, of wisdom and folly, nay, of absurdity and silliness; could kindle and thrill their inmost souls, and set their stagnant nature into movement, free, vehement, and pure!" So said our friend; and, as neither Laertes nor Philina showed any disposition to take part in such a strain, he

entertained himself with these daring speculations, walking up and down the streets till late at night, and again pursuing, with all the force and vivacity of a liberated imagination, his old desire to have all that was good and noble and great embodied and shown forth by the theatric art.

CHAPTER V.

NEXT morning the rope-dancers, not without much parade and bustle, having gone away, Mignon immediately appeared, and came into the parlour as Wilhelm and Laertes were busy fencing. "Where hast thou been hid?" said Wilhelm, in a friendly tone. "Thou hast given us a great deal of anxiety." The child looked at him, and answered nothing. "Thou art ours now," cried Laertes: "we have bought thee." "For how much?" inquired the child quite coolly. "For a hundred ducats," said the other: "pay them again, and thou art free." "Is that very much?" she asked. "Oh, yes! thou must now be a good child." "I will try," she said.

From that moment she observed strictly what services the waiter had to do for both her friends; and after next day, she would not any more let him enter the room. She persisted in doing everything herself, and accordingly went through her duties, slowly, indeed, and sometimes awkwardly, yet completely, and with the greatest care.

She was frequently observed going to a basin of water, and washing her face with such diligence and violence, that she almost wore the skin from her cheeks; till Laertes, by dint of questions and reproofs, learned that she was striving by all means to get the paint from her skin, and that, in her zealous endeavours toward this object, she had mistaken the redness produced by rubbing for the most obdurate dye. They set her right on this point, and she ceased her efforts; after which, having come again to her

natural state, she exhibited a fine brown complexion, beautiful, though sparingly intermingled with red.

The siren charms of Philina, the mysterious presence of the child, produced more impression on our friend than he liked to confess: he passed several days in that strange society, endeavouring to elude self-reproaches by a diligent practice of fencing and dancing, — accomplishments which he believed might not again be put within his reach so conveniently.

It was with great surprise, and not without a certain satisfaction, that he one day observed Herr Melina and his wife alight at the inn. After the first glad salutation, they inquired about "the lady-manager and the other actors," and learned, with astonishment and terror, that the lady-manager had long since gone away, and her actors, to a very few, dispersed themselves about the country.

This couple, subsequently to their marriage, in which, as we know, our friend did his best to serve them, had been travelling about in various quarters, seeking an engagement, without finding any, and had at last been directed to this little town by some persons who met them on their journey, and said there was a good theatre in the place.

Melina by no means pleased the lively Laertes, when introduced to him, any more than his wife did Philina. Both heartily wished to be rid of these newcomers; and Wilhelm could inspire them with no favourable feelings on the subject, though he more than once assured them that the Melinas were very worthy people.

Indeed, the previous merry life of our three adventurers was interfered with by this extension of their society, in more ways than one. Melina had taken up his quarters in the inn where Philina stayed, and he very soon began a system of cheapening and higgling. He would have better lodging, more sump-

tuous diet, and readier attendance, for a smaller charge. In a short while, the landlord and waiter showed very rueful looks; for whereas the others, to get pleasantly along, had expressed no discontent with anything, and paid instantly, that they might avoid thinking longer of payment, Melina now insisted on regulating every meal, and investigating its contents beforehand, — a species of service for which Philina named him, without scruple, a ruminating animal.

Yet more did the merry girl hate Melina's wife. Frau Melina was a young woman not without culture, but wofully defective in soul and spirit. She could declaim not badly, and kept declaiming constantly; but it was easy to observe that her performances were little more than recitations of words. She laboured a few detached passages, but never could express the feeling of the whole. Withal, however, she was seldom disagreeable to any one, especially to men. On the contrary, people who enjoyed her acquaintance commonly ascribed to her a fine understanding; for she was what might be called a kind of *spiritual chameleon*, or *taker-on*. Any friend whose favour she had need of she could flatter with peculiar adroitness, could give in to his ideas so long as she could understand them, and, when they went beyond her own horizon, could hail with ecstasy such new and brilliant visions. She understood well when to speak and when to keep silence; and, though her disposition was not spiteful, she could spy out with great expertness where another's weak side lay.

CHAPTER VI.

MELINA, in the meantime, had been making strict inquiry about the wrecks of the late theatrical establishment. The wardrobe, as well as decorations, had been pawned with some traders; and a notary had been empowered, under certain conditions, to dispose of them by sale, should purchasers occur. Melina wished to see this ware, and he took Wilhelm with him. No sooner was the room opened, than our friend felt toward its contents a kind of inclination, which he would not confess to himself. Sad as was the state of the blotched and tarnished decorations; little showy as the Turkish and pagan garments, the old farce-coats for men and women, the cowls for enchanters, priests, and Jews, might be, — he was not able to exclude the feeling, that the happiest moments of his life had been spent in a similar magazine of frippery. Could Melina have seen into his heart, he would have urged him more pressingly to lay out a sum of money in liberating these scattered fragments, in furbishing them up, and again combining them into a beautiful whole.

"What a happy man could I be," cried Melina, "had I but two hundred crowns, to get into my hands, for a beginning, these fundamental necessaries of a theatre! How soon should I get up a little playhouse, that would draw contributions from the town and neighbourhood, and maintain us all!" Wilhelm was silent. They left these treasures of the stage to be again locked up, and both went away in a reflective mood.

Thenceforth Melina talked of nothing else but projects and plans for setting up a theatre, and gaining profit by it. He tried to interest Philina and Laertes

in his schemes; and proposals were made to Wilhelm about advancing money, and taking them as his security. On this occasion, Wilhelm first clearly perceived that he was lingering too long here: he excused himself, and set about making preparations for departure.

In the meantime, Mignon's form, and manner of existence, were growing more attractive to him every day. In her whole system of proceedings there was something very singular. She never walked up or down the stairs, but jumped. She would spring along by the railing, and before you were aware would be sitting quietly above upon the landing. Wilhelm had observed, also, that she had a different sort of salutation for each individual. For himself, it had of late been with her arms crossed upon her breast. Often for the whole day she was mute. At times she answered various questions more freely, yet always strangely: so that you could not determine whether it was caused by shrewd sense, or ignorance of the language; for she spoke in broken German interlaced with French and Italian. In Wilhelm's service she was indefatigable, and up before the sun. On the other hand, she vanished early in the evening, went to sleep in a little room upon the bare floor, and could not by any means be induced to take a bed or even a *paillasse*. He often found her washing herself. Her clothes, too, were kept scrupulously clean; though nearly all about her was quilted two or three plies thick. Wilhelm was moreover told, that she went every morning early to hear mass. He followed her on one occasion, and saw her kneeling down with a rosary in a corner of the church, and praying devoutly. She did not observe him; and he returned home, forming many a conjecture about this appearance, yet unable to arrive at any probable conclusion.

A new application from Melina for a sum of money

to redeem the often-mentioned stage apparatus caused Wilhelm to think more seriously than ever about setting off. He proposed writing to his people, who for a long time had heard no tidings of him, by the very earliest post. He accordingly commenced a letter to Werner, and had advanced a considerable way with the history of his adventures, in recounting which he had more than once unintentionally swerved a little from the truth, when, to his vexation and surprise, he observed, upon the back of his sheet, some verses which he had been copying from his album for Madam Melina. Out of humour at this mistake, he tore the paper in pieces, and put off repeating his confession till the next post-day.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR party was now again collected; and Philina, who always kept a sharp lookout on every horse or carriage that passed by, exclaimed with great eagerness, "Our Pedant! Here comes our dearest Pedant! Who the deuce is it he has with him?" Speaking thus, she beckoned at the window; and the vehicle drew up.

A woful-looking genius, whom by his shabby coat of grayish brown, and his ill-conditioned lower garments, you must have taken for some unprosperous preceptor, of the sort that moulder in our universities, now descended from the carriage, and, taking off his hat to salute Philina, discovered an ill-powdered, but yet very stiff, periwig; while Philina threw a hundred kisses of the hand toward him.

As Philina's chief enjoyment lay in loving one class of men, and being loved by them; so there was a second and hardly inferior satisfaction, wherewith she entertained herself as frequently as possible; and this consisted in hoodwinking and passing jokes upon the other class, whom at such moments she happened not to love, — all which she could accomplish in a very sprightly style.

Amid the flourish which she made in receiving this old friend, no attention was bestowed upon the rest who followed him. Yet among the party were an oldish man and two young girls, whom Wilhelm thought he knew. Accordingly it turned out, that he had often seen them all, some years ago, in a company then playing in his native town. The daughters had

grown since that period: the old man was a little altered. He commonly enacted those good-hearted, boisterous old gentlemen, whom the German theatre is never without, and whom, in common life, one also frequently enough falls in with. For as it is the character of our countrymen to do good, and cause it, without pomp or circumstance; so they seldom consider that there is likewise a mode of doing what is right with grace and dignity: more frequently, indeed, they yield to the spirit of contradiction, and fall into the error of deforming their dearest virtue by a surly mode of putting it in practice.

Such parts our actor could play very well; and he played them so often and exclusively, that he had himself taken up the same turn of proceeding in his ordinary life.

On recognising him, Wilhelm was seized with a strong commotion; for he recollected how often he had seen this man on the stage with his beloved Mariana: he still heard him scolding, still heard the small, soothing voice, with which in many characters she had to meet his rugged temper.

The first anxious question put to the strangers, — Whether they had heard of any situation in their travels? — was answered, alas, with No! and, to complete the information, it was further added, that all the companies they had fallen in with were not only supplied with actors, but many of them were afraid lest, on account of the approaching war, they should be forced to separate. Old Boisterous, with his daughters, moved by spleen and love of change, had given up an advantageous engagement: then, meeting with the Pedant by the way, they had hired a carriage to come hither; where, as they found, good counsel was still dear, needful to have, and difficult to get.

The time while the rest were talking very keenly of their circumstances, Wilhelm spent in thought. He

longed to speak in private with the old man: he wished and feared to hear of Mariana, and felt the greatest disquietude.

The pretty looks of the stranger damsels could not call him from his dream; but a war of words, which now arose, awakened his attention. It was Friedrich, the fair-haired boy who used to attend Philina, stubbornly refusing, on this occasion, to cover the table and bring up dinner. "I engaged to serve you," he cried, "but not to wait on everybody." They fell into a hot contest. Philina insisted that he should do his duty; and, as he obstinately refused, she told him plainly he might go about his business.

"You think, perhaps, I cannot leave you!" cried he sturdily, then went to pack up his bundle, and soon hastily quitted the house.

"Go, Mignon," said Philina, "and get us what we want: tell the waiter, and help him to attend us."

Mignon came before Wilhelm, and asked in her laconic way, "Shall I? May I?" To which Wilhelm answered, "Do all the lady bids thee, child."

She accordingly took charge of everything, and waited on the guests the whole evening, with the utmost carefulness. After dinner, Wilhelm proposed to have a walk with the old man alone. Succeeding in this, after many questions about his late wanderings, the conversation turned upon the former company; and Wilhelm hazarded a question touching Mariana.

"Do not speak to me of that despicable creature!" cried the old man: "I have sworn to think of her no more." Terrified at this speech, Wilhelm felt still more embarrassed, as the old man proceeded to vituperate her fickleness and wantonness. Most gladly would our friend have broken off the conversation, but now it was impossible: he was obliged to undergo the whole tumultuous effusions of this strange old gentleman.

"I am ashamed," continued he, "that I felt such a friendship for her. Yet, had you known the girl better, you would excuse me. She was so pretty, so natural and good, so pleasing, in every sense so tolerable, I could never have supposed that ingratitude and impudence were to prove the chief features of her character."

Wilhelm had nerved himself to hear the worst of her; when all at once he observed, with astonishment, that the old man's tones grew milder, his voice faltered, and he took out his handerchief to dry the tears, which at last began to trickle down his cheeks.

"What is the matter with you?" cried Wilhelm. "What is it that suddenly so changes the current of your feelings? Conceal it not from me. I take a deeper interest in the fate of this girl than you suppose. Only tell me all."

"I have not much to say," replied the old man, again taking up his earnest, angry tone. "I have suffered more from her than I shall ever forgive. She had always a kind of trust in me. I loved her as my own daughter; indeed, while my wife lived, I had formed a resolution to take the creature to my own house, and save her from the hands of that old crone, from whose guidance I boded no good. But my wife died, and the project went to nothing.

"About the end of our stay in your native town, — it is not quite three years ago, — I noticed a visible sadness about her. I questioned her, but she evaded me. At last we set out on our journey. She travelled in the same coach with me; and I soon observed, what she herself did not long deny, that she was with child, and suffering the greatest terror lest our manager might turn her off. In fact, in a short while he did make the discovery; immediately threw up her contract, which at any rate was only for six weeks; paid off her arrears; and, in spite of all entreaties,

left her behind, in the miserable inn of a little village.

"Devil take all wanton jilts!" cried the old man, with a splenetic tone, "and especially this one, that has spoiled me so many hours of my life! Why should I keep talking how I myself took charge of her, what I did for her, what I spent on her, how in absence I provided for her? I would rather throw my purse into the ditch, and spend my time in nursing mangy whelps, than ever more bestow the smallest care on such a thing. Pshaw! At first I got letters of thanks, notice of places she was staying at; and, finally, no word at all, — not even an acknowledgment for the money I had sent to pay the expenses of her lying-in. Oh! the treachery and the fickleness of women are rightly matched, to get a comfortable living for themselves, and to give an honest fellow many heavy hours."

CHAPTER VIII.

WILHELM'S feelings, on returning home after this conversation, may be easily conceived. All his old wounds had been torn up afresh, and the sentiment that Mariana was not wholly unworthy of his love had again been brought to life. The interest the old man had shown about her fate, the praises he gave her against his will, displayed her again in all her attractiveness. Nay, even the bitter accusations brought against her contained nothing that could lower her in Wilhelm's estimation; for he, as well as she, was guilty in all her aberrations. Nor did even her final silence seem greatly blamable: it rather inspired him with mournful thoughts. He saw her as a frail, ill-succoured mother, wandering helplessly about the world, — wandering, perhaps, with his own child. What he knew, and what he knew not, awoke in him the painfullest emotions.

Mignon had been waiting for him: she lighted him up-stairs. On setting down the light, she begged he would allow her, that evening, to compliment him with a piece of her art. He would rather have declined this, particularly as he knew not what it was; but he had not the heart to refuse anything this kind creature wished. After a little while she again came in. She carried below her arm a little carpet, which she then spread out upon the floor. Wilhelm said she might proceed. She thereupon brought four candles, and placed one upon each corner of the carpet. A little basket of eggs, which she next carried in, made her purpose clearer. Carefully measuring her steps,

she then walked to and fro on the carpet, spreading out the eggs in certain figures and positions; which done, she called in a man that was waiting in the house, and could play on the violin. He retired with his instrument into a corner; she tied a band about her eyes, gave a signal; and, like a piece of wheel-work set a-going, she began moving the same instant as the music, accompanying her beats and the notes of the tune with the strokes of a pair of castanets.

Lightly, nimbly, quickly, and with hair's-breadth accuracy, she carried on the dance. She skipped so sharply and surely along between the eggs, and trod so closely down beside them, that you would have thought every instant she must trample one of them in pieces, or kick the rest away in her rapid turns. By no means! She touched no one of them, though winding herself through their mazes with all kinds of steps, wide and narrow, nay, even with leaps, and at last half kneeling.

Constant as the movement of a clock, she ran her course; and the strange music, at each repetition of the tune, gave a new impulse to the dance, recommencing and again rushing off as at first. Wilhelm was quite led away by this singular spectacle; he forgot his cares; he followed every movement of the dear little creature, and felt surprised to see how finely her character unfolded itself as she proceeded in the dance.

Rigid, sharp, cold, vehement, and in soft postures, stately rather than attractive, — such was the light in which it showed her. At this moment he experienced at once all the emotions he had ever felt for Mignon. He longed to incorporate this forsaken being with his own heart, to take her in his arms, and with a father's love to awaken in her the joy of existence.

The dance being ended, she rolled the eggs together softly with her foot into a little heap, left none behind,

harmed none; then placed herself beside it, taking the bandage from her eyes. and concluding her performance with a little bow.

Wilhelm thanked her for having executed, so prettily and unexpectedly, a dance he had long wished to see. He patted her; was sorry she had tired herself so much. He promised her a new suit of clothes; to which she vehemently replied, "Thy colour!" This, too, he promised her, though not well knowing what she meant by it. She then lifted up the eggs, took the carpet under her arm, asked if he wanted anything further, and skipped out of the room.

The musician, being questioned, said, that for some time she had taken much trouble in often singing over the tune of this dance, the well-known fandango, to him, and training him till he could play it accurately. For his labour she had likewise offered him some money; which, however, he would not accept.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER a restless night, which our friend spent, sometimes waking, sometimes oppressed with unpleasant dreams, seeing Mariana now in all her beauty, now in woful case, at one time with a child on her arm, then soon bereaved of it, the morning had scarcely dawned, when Mignon entered with a tailor. She brought some gray cloth and blue taffeta; signifying in her own way that she wished to have a new jacket and sailor's trousers, such as she had seen the boys of the town wear, with blue cuffs and tiers.

Since the loss of Mariana, Wilhelm had laid aside all gay colours. He had used himself to gray, — the garment of the shades; and only perhaps a sky-blue lining, or little collar of that dye, in some degree enlivened his sober garb. Mignon, eager to wear his colours, hurried on the tailor, who engaged to have his work soon ready.

The exercise in dancing and fencing, which our friend took this day with Laertes, did not prosper in their hands. Indeed, it was soon interrupted by Melina, who came to show them circumstantially how a little company was now of itself collected, sufficient to exhibit plays in abundance. He renewed the proposal that Wilhelm should advance a little money for setting them in motion; which, however, Wilhelm still declined.

Ere long Philina and the girls came in, racketing and laughing as usual. They had now devised a fresh excursion, for change of place and objects was a pleasure after which they always longed. To eat daily in

a different spot was their highest wish. On this occasion they proposed a sail.

The boat in which they were to fall down the pleasant windings of the river had already been engaged by the Pedant. Philina urged them on; the party did not linger, and was soon on board.

"What shall we take to now?" said Philina, when all had placed themselves upon the benches.

"The readiest thing," replied Laertes, "were for us to extemporise a play. Let each take a part that suits his character, and we shall see how we get along."

"Excellent!" said Wilhelm. "In a society where there is no dissimulation, but where each without disguise pursues the bent of his own humour, elegance and satisfaction cannot long continue; and, where dissimulation always reigns, they do not enter at all. It will not be amiss, then, that we take up dissimulation to begin with, and then, behind our masks, be as candid as we please."

"Yes," said Laertes: "it is on this account that one goes on so pleasantly with women; they never show themselves in their natural form."

"That is to say," replied Madam Melina, "they are not so vain as men, who conceive themselves to be always amiable enough, just as nature has produced them."

In the meantime the river led them between pleasant groves and hills, between gardens and vineyards; and the young women, especially Madam Melina, expressed their rapture at the landscape. The latter even began to recite, in solemn style, a pretty poem of the descriptive sort, upon a similar scene of nature; but Philina interrupted her with the proposal of a law, that no one should presume to speak of any inanimate object. On the other hand, she zealously urged on their project of an extempore play. Old Boisterous

was to be a half-pay officer; Laertes a fencing-master, taking his vacation; the Pedant, a Jew; she herself would act a Tyrolese; leaving to the rest to choose characters according to their several pleasures. They would suppose themselves to be a party of total strangers to each other, who had just met on board a merchant-ship.

She immediately began to play her part with the Jew, and a universal cheerfulness diffused itself among them.

They had not sailed far, when the skipper stopped in his course, asking permission of the company to take in a person standing on the shore, who had made a sign to him.

"That is just what we needed," cried Philina: "a chance passenger was wanting to complete the travelling-party."

A handsome man came on board; whom, by his dress and his dignified mien, you might have taken for a clergyman. He saluted the party, who thanked him in their own way, and soon made known to him the nature of their game. The stranger immediately engaged to act the part of a country parson; which, in fact, he accomplished in the adroitest manner, to the admiration of all, — now admonishing, now telling stories, showing some weak points, yet never losing their respect.

In the meantime, every one who had made a false step in his part, or swerved from his character, had been obliged to forfeit a pledge: Philina had gathered them with the greatest care, and especially threatened the reverend gentleman with many kisses; though he himself had never been at fault. Melina, on the other hand, was completely fleeced: shirt-buttons, buckles, every movable about his person, was in Philina's hands. He was trying to enact an English traveller, and could not by any means get into the spirit of his part.

Meanwhile the time had passed away very pleasantly. Each had strained his fancy and his wit to the utmost, and each had garnished his part with agreeable and entertaining jests. Thus comfortably occupied, they reached the place where they meant to pass the day; and Wilhelm, going out to walk with the clergyman, as both from his appearance and late character he persisted in naming him, soon fell into an interesting conversation.

"I think this practice," said the stranger, "very useful among actors, and even in the company of friends and acquaintances. It is the best mode of drawing men out of themselves, and leading them, by a circuitous path, back into themselves again. It should be a custom with every troop of players to practise in this manner: and the public would assuredly be no loser if every month an unwritten piece were brought forward; in which, of course, the players had prepared themselves by several rehearsals."

"One should not, then," replied our friend, "consider an extempore piece as, strictly speaking, composed on the spur of the moment, but as a piece, of which the plan, action, and division of the scenes were given; the filling up of all this being left to the player."

"Quite right," said the stranger; "and, in regard to this very filling up, such a piece, were the players once trained to these performances, would profit greatly. Not in regard to the mere words, it is true; for, by a careful selection of these, the studious writer may certainly adorn his work; but in regard to the gestures, looks, exclamations, and everything of that nature: in short, to the mute and half-mute play of the dialogue, which seems by degrees fading away among us altogether. There are indeed some players in Germany whose bodies figure what they think and feel; who by their silence, their delays, their looks, their slight, graceful movements, can prepare the audience for a

speech, and by a pleasant sort of pantomime, combine the pauses of the dialogue with the general whole; but such a practice as this, coöperating with a happy natural turn, and training it to compete with the author, is far from being so habitual as, for the comfort of playgoing people, were to be desired."

"But will not a happy natural turn," said Wilhelm, "as the first and last requisite, of itself conduct the player, like every other artist, — nay, perhaps every other man, — to the lofty mark he aims at?"

"The first and the last, the beginning and the end, it may well be; but, in the middle, many things will still be wanting to an artist, if instruction, and early instruction too, have not previously made that of him which he was meant to be: and perhaps for the man of genius it is worse in this respect than for the man possessed of only common capabilities; the one may much more easily be misinstructed, and be driven far more violently into false courses, than the other."

"But," said Wilhelm, "will not genius save itself, not heal the wounds which itself has inflicted?"

"Only to a very small extent, and with great difficulty," said the other, "or perhaps not at all. Let no one think that he can conquer the first impressions of his youth. If he has grown up in enviable freedom, surrounded with beautiful and noble objects, in constant intercourse with worthy men; if his masters have taught him what he needed first to know, for comprehending more easily what followed; if he has never learned anything which he requires to unlearn; if his first operations have been so guided, that, without altering any of his habits, he can more easily produce what is excellent in future, — then such a one will lead a purer, more perfect and happier, life, than another man who has wasted the force of his youth in opposition and error. A great deal is said and written about education; yet I meet with very few who can

comprehend, and transfer to practice, this simple yet vast idea, which includes within itself all others connected with the subject."

"That may well be true," said Wilhelm; "for the generality of men are limited enough in their conceptions to suppose that every other should be fashioned by education, according to the pattern of themselves. Happy, then, are those whom Fate takes charge of, and educates according to their several natures!"

"Fate," said the other, smiling, "is an excellent but most expensive schoolmaster. In all cases, I would rather trust to the reason of a human tutor. Fate, for whose wisdom I entertain all imaginable reverence, often finds in Chance, by which it works, an instrument not overmanageable. At least the latter very seldom seems to execute precisely and accurately what the former had determined."

"You seem to express a very singular opinion," said Wilhelm.

"Not at all," replied the other. "Most of what happens in the world confirms my opinion. Do not many incidents at their commencement show some mighty purport, and generally terminate in something paltry?"

"You mean to jest."

"And as to what concerns the individual man," pursued the other, "is it not so with this likewise? Suppose Fate had appointed one to be a good player; and why should it not provide us with good players as well as other good things? Chance would perhaps conduct the youth into some puppet-show, where, at such an early age, he could not help taking interest in what was tasteless and despicable, reckoning insipidities endurable or even pleasing, and thus corrupting and misdirecting his primary impressions, — impressions which can never be effaced, and whose influence, in spite of all our efforts, clings to us in some degree to the very last."

"What makes you think of puppet-shows?" said Wilhelm, not without some consternation.

"It was an accidental instance: if it does not please you, we shall take another. Suppose Fate had appointed any one to be a great painter, and it pleased Chance that he should pass his youth in sooty huts, in barns and stables: do you think that such a man would ever be enabled to exalt himself to purity, to nobleness, to freedom of soul? The more keenly he may in his youth have seized on the impure, and tried in his own manner to ennoble it, the more powerfully in the remainder of his life will it be revenged on him; because, while he was endeavouring to conquer it, his whole being has become inseparably combined with it. Whoever spends his early years in mean and pitiful society, though at an after period he may have the choice of better, will yet constantly look back with longing toward that which he enjoyed of old, and which has left its impression blended with the memory of all his young and unreturning pleasures."

From conversation of this sort, it is easy to imagine, the rest of the company had gradually withdrawn. Philina, in particular, had stepped aside at the very outset. Wilhelm and his comrade now rejoined them by a cross-path. Philina brought out her forfeits, and they had to be redeemed in many different ways. During which business, the stranger, by the most ingenious devices, and by his frank participation in their sports, recommended himself much to all the party, and particularly to the ladies; and thus, amid joking, singing, kissing, and railleries of all sorts, the hours passed away in the most pleasant manner.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN our friends began to think of going home, they looked about them for their clergyman; but he had vanished, and was nowhere to be found.

"It is not polite in the man, who otherwise displayed good breeding," said Madam Melina, "to desert a company that welcomed him so kindly, without taking leave."

"I have all the time been thinking," said Laertes, "where I can have seen this singular man before. I fully intended to ask him about it at parting."

"I, too, had the same feeling," said Wilhelm; "and certainly I should not have let him go, till he had told us something more about his circumstances. I am much mistaken if I have not ere now spoken with him somewhere."

"And you may in truth," said Philina, "be mistaken there. This person seems to have the air of an acquaintance, because he looks like a *man*, and not like Jack or Kit."

"What is this?" said Laertes. "Do not we, too, look like men?"

"I know what I am saying," cried Philina; "and, if you cannot understand me, never mind. In the end my words will be found to require no commentary."

Two coaches now drove up. All praised the attention of Laertes, who had ordered them. Philina, with Madam Melina, took her place opposite to Wilhelm: the rest bestowed themselves as they best could. Laertes rode back on Wilhelm's horse, which had likewise been brought out.

Philina was scarcely seated in the coach, when she began to sing some pretty songs, and gradually led the conversation to some stories, which she said might be successfully treated in the form of dramas. By this cunning turn, she very soon put her young friend into his finest humour: from the wealth of his living imaginative store, he forthwith constructed a complete play, with all its acts, scenes, characters, and plots. It was thought proper to insert a few catches and songs; they composed them; and Philina, who entered into every part of it, immediately fitted them with well-known tunes, and sang them on the spot.

It was one of her beautiful, most beautiful, days: she had skill to enliven our friend with all manner of diverting wiles; he felt in spirits such as he had not for many a month enjoyed.

Since that shocking discovery had torn him from the side of Mariana, he had continued true to his vow to be on his guard against the encircling arms of woman; to avoid the faithless sex; to lock up his inclinations, his sweet wishes, in his own bosom. The conscientiousness with which he had observed this vow gave his whole nature a secret nourishment; and, as his heart could not remain without affection, some loving sympathy had now become a want with him. He went along once more, as if environed by the first cloudy glories of youth; his eye fixed joyfully on every charming object, and never had his judgment of a lovely form been more favourable. How dangerous, in such a situation, this wild girl must have been to him, is but too easy to conceive.

Arrived at home, they found Wilhelm's chamber all ready to receive them; the chairs set right for a public reading; in midst of them the table, on which the punch-bowl was in due time to take its place.

The German chivalry-plays were new at this period, and had just excited the attention and the inclination

of the public. Old Boisterous had brought one of this sort with him: the reading of it had already been determined on. They all sat down: Wilhelm took possession of the pamphlet, and began to read.

The harnessed knights, the ancient keeps, the true-heartedness, honesty, and downrightness, but especially the independence of the acting characters, were received with the greatest approbation. The reader did his utmost, and the audience gradually mounted into rapture. Between the third and fourth acts, the punch arrived in an ample bowl; and, there being much fighting and drinking in the piece itself, nothing was more natural than that, on every such occurrence, the company should transport themselves into the situation of the heroes, should flourish and strike along with them, and drink long life to their favourites among the *dramatis personæ*.

Each individual of the party was inflamed with the noblest fire of national spirit. How it gratified this German company to be poetically entertained, according to their own character, on stuff of their own manufacture! In particular, the vaults and caverns, the ruined castles, the moss and hollow trees, but above all the nocturnal gypsy scenes, and the Secret Tribunal, produced a quite incredible effect. Every actor now figured to himself how, erelong, in helm and harness, he; every actress how, with a monstrous spreading ruff, she, — would present their Germanship before the public. Each would appropriate to himself without delay some name taken from the piece or from German history; and Madam Melina declared that the son or daughter she was then expecting should not be christened otherwise than by the name of Adelbert or of Mathilde.

Toward the fifth act, the approbation became more impetuous and louder; and at last, when the hero actually trampled down his oppressor, and the tyrant

met his doom, the ecstasy increased to such a height, that all averred they had never passed such happy moments. Melina, whom the liquor had inspired, was the noisiest: and when the second bowl was emptied, and midnight near, Laertes swore through thick and thin, that no living mortal was worthy ever more to put these glasses to his lips; and, so swearing. he pitched his own right over his head, through a window-pane, out into the street. The rest followed his example; and notwithstanding the protestations of the landlord, who came running in at the noise, the punch-bowl itself, never after this festivity to be polluted by unholy drink, was dashed into a thousand shreds. Philina, whose exhilaration was the least noticed, — the other two girls by that time having laid themselves upon the sofa in no very elegant positions, — maliciously encouraged her companions in their tumult. Madam Melina recited some spirit-stirring poems; and her husband, not too amiable in the uproar, began to cavil at the insufficient preparation of the punch, declaring that he could arrange an entertainment altogether in a different style, and at last becoming sulkier and louder as Laertes commanded silence, till the latter, without much consideration, threw the fragments of the punch-bowl about his head, and thereby not a little deepened the confusion.

Meanwhile the town guard had arrived, and were demanding admission to the house. Wilhelm, much heated by his reading, though he had drunk but little, had enough to do, with the landlord's help, to content these people by money and good words, and afterward to get the various members of his party sent home in that unseemly case. On coming back, overpowered with sleep and full of chagrin, he threw himself upon his bed without undressing; and nothing could exceed his disgust, when, opening his eyes next morning, he

looked out with dull sight upon the devastations of the bygone day, and saw the uncleanness, and the many bad effects, of which that ingenious, lively, and well-intentioned poetical performance had been the cause.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER a short consideration, he called the landlord, and bade him mark to his account both the damage and the regular charge. At the same time he learned, not without vexation, that his horse had been so hard ridden by Laertes last night, that, in all probability, it was foundered, as they term it; the farrier having little hope of its recovering.

A salute from Philina, which she threw him from her window, restored him in some degree to a more cheerful humour: he went forthwith into the nearest shop to buy her a little present, which, in return for the powder-knife, he still owed her; and it must be owned, that, in selecting his gift, he did not keep himself within the limits of proportional value. He not only purchased her a pair of earrings, but added likewise a hat and neckerchief, and some other little articles, which he had seen her lavishly throw from her on the first day of their acquaintance.

Madam Melina, happening to observe him as he was delivering his presents, took an opportunity before breakfast to rate him very earnestly about his inclination for this girl; at which he felt the more astonished, the less he thought it merited. He swore solemnly, that he had never once entertained the slightest notion of attaching himself to such a person, whose whole manner of proceeding was well known to him. He excused himself as well as possible for his friendly and polite conduct toward her, yet did not by any means content Madam Melina, whose spite grew ever

more determined, as she could not but observe that the flatteries, by which she had acquired for herself a sort of partial regard from our friend, were not sufficient to defend this conquest from the attacks of a lively, younger, and more gifted rival.

As they sat down to table, her husband joined them, likewise in a very fretful humour; which he was beginning to display on many little things, when the landlord entered to announce a player on the harp. "You will certainly," he said, "find pleasure in the music and the songs of this man: no one who hears him can forbear to admire him, and bestow something on him."

"Let him go about his business," said Melina: "I am anything but in a trim for hearing fiddlers, and we have singers constantly among ourselves disposed to gain a little by their talent." He accompanied these words with a sarcastic side-look at Philina: she understood his meaning, and immediately prepared to punish him, by taking up the cause of the harper. Turning toward Wilhelm, "Shall we not hear the man?" said she: "shall we do nothing to save ourselves from this miserable *ennui?*"

Melina was going to reply, and the strife would have grown keener, had not the person it related to at that moment entered. Wilhelm saluted him, and beckoned him to come near.

The figure of this singular guest set the whole party in astonishment: he had found a chair before any one took heart to ask him a question, or make any observation. His bald crown was encircled by a few gray hairs, and a pair of large blue eyes looked out softly from beneath his long white eyebrows. To a nose of beautiful proportions was subjoined a flowing, hoary beard, which did not hide the fine shape and position of his lips; and a long dark-brown garment wrapped his thin body from the neck to the feet. He began

to prelude on the harp, which he had placed before him.

The sweet tones which he drew from his instrument very soon inspirited the company.

"You can sing, too, my good old man," said Philina.

"Give us something that shall entertain the spirit and the heart as well as the senses," said Wilhelm. "The instrument should but accompany the voice; for tunes and melodies without words and meaning seem to me like butterflies or finely variegated birds, which hover round us in the air, which we could wish to catch and make our own: whereas song is like a blessed genius that exalts us toward heaven, and allures the better self in us to attend him."

The old man looked at Wilhelm, then aloft, then gave some trills upon his harp, and began his song. It contained a eulogy on minstrelsy, — described the happiness of minstrels, and reminded men to honour them. He produced his song with so much life and truth, that it seemed as if he had composed it at the moment, for this special occasion. Wilhelm could scarcely refrain from clasping him in his arms; but the fear of awakening a peal of laughter detained him in his chair; for the rest were already in half-whispers making sundry very shallow observations, and debating if the harper was a Papist or a Jew.

When asked about the author of the song, the man gave no distinct reply; declaring only that he was rich in songs, and anxious that they should please. Most of the party were now merry and joyful; even Melina was grown frank in his way; and, whilst they talked and joked together, the old man began to sing the praise of social life in the most sprightly style. He described the loveliness of unity and courtesy, in soft, soothing tones. Suddenly his music became cold, harsh, and jarring, as he turned to deplore repulsive selfishness, short-sighted enmity, and baleful division; and

every heart willingly threw off those galling fetters, while, borne on the wings of a piercing melody, he launched forth in praise of peacemakers, and sang the happiness of souls, that, having parted, meet again in love.

Scarcely had he ended, when Wilhelm cried to him, "Whoever thou art, that as a helping spirit comest to us with a voice which blesses and revives, accept my reverence and my thanks! Feel that we all admire thee, and confide in us if thou wantest anything."

The old man spoke not: he threw his fingers softly across the strings, then struck more sharply, and sang:

"'What notes are those without the wall,
Across the portal sounding?
Let's have the music in our hall,
Back from its roof rebounding.'
So spoke the king, the henchman flies:
His answer heard, the monarch cries,
'Bring in that ancient minstrel.'

"'Hail, gracious king! each noble knight,
Each lovely dame, I greet you!
What glittering stars salute my sight!
What heart unmoved may meet you!
Such lordly pomp is not for me,
Far other scenes my eyes must see:
Yet deign to list my harping.'

"The singer turns him to his art,
A thrilling strain he raises;
Each warrior hears with glowing heart,
And on his loved one gazes.
The king, who liked his playing well,
Commands, for such a kindly spell,
A golden chain be given him.

"'The golden chain give not to me;
Thy boldest knight may wear it,
Who, 'cross the battle's purple sea,
On lion breast may bear it:

Or let it be thy chancellor's prize,
Amid his heaps to feast his eyes;
Its yellow glance will please him.

"'I sing but as the linnet sings,
That on the green bough dwelleth;
A rich reward his music brings,
As from his throat it swelleth:
Yet might I ask, I'd ask of thine
One sparkling draught of purest wine,
To drink it here before you.'

"He viewed the wine; he quaffed it up.
'O draught of sweetest savour!
O happy house, where such a cup
Is thought a little favour!
If well you fare, remember me,
And thank kind Heaven, from envy free,
As now for this I thank you.'"

When the harper, on finishing his song, took up a glass of wine that stood poured out for him, and, turning with a friendly mien to his entertainers, drank it off, a buzz of joyful approbation rose from all the party. They clapped hands, and wished him health from that glass, and strength to his aged limbs. He sang a few other ballads, exciting more and more hilarity among the company.

"Old man," said Philina, "dost thou know the tune, 'The shepherd decked him for the dance?'"[1]

"Oh, yes!" said he: "if you will sing the words, I shall not fail for my part of it."

Philina then stood up, and held herself in readiness. The old man commenced the tune; and she sang a song, which we cannot impart to our readers, lest they might think it insipid, or perhaps undignified.

Meanwhile the company were growing merrier and merrier: they had already emptied several flasks of wine, and were now beginning to get very loud. But

[1] "Der Schafer putzte sich zum Tanz,"—a song of Goethe's.—ED.

our friend, having fresh in his remembrance the bad consequences of their late exhilaration, determined to break up the sitting; he slipped into the old man's hand a liberal remuneration for his trouble, the rest did something likewise; they gave him leave to go and take repose, promising themselves another entertainment from his skill in the evening.

When he had retired, our friend said to Philina, "In this favourite song of yours I certainly find no merit, either moral or poetical; yet if you were to bring forward any proper composition on the stage, with the same arch simplicity, the same propriety and gracefulness, I should engage that strong and universal approbation would be the result."

"Yes," said Philina: "it would be a charming thing indeed to warm one's self at ice."

"After all," said Wilhelm, "this old man might put many a player to the blush. Did you notice how correctly the dramatic part of his ballads was expressed? I maintain there was more living true representation in his singing than in many of our starched characters upon the stage. You would take the acting of many plays for a narrative, and you might ascribe to these musical narratives a sensible presence."

"You are hardly just," replied Laertes. "I pretend to no great skill, either as a player or as a singer; yet I know well enough, that when music guides the movements of the body, at once affording to them animation and a scale to measure it; when declamation and expression are furnished me by the composer, — I feel a quite different man from what I do when, in prose dramas, I have all this to create for myself, — have both gesture and declamation to invent, and am, perhaps, disturbed in it, too, by the awkwardness of some partner in the dialogue."

"Thus much I know," said Melina: "the man certainly puts us to the blush in one point, and that a

main point. The strength of his talent is shown by the profit he derives from it. Even us, who perhaps erelong shall be embarrassed where to get a meal, he persuades to share our pittance with him. He has skill enough to wile the money from our pockets with an old song, — the money that we should have used to find ourselves employment. So pleasant an affair is it to squander the means which might procure subsistence to one's self and others."

This remark gave the conversation not the most delightful turn. Wilhelm, for whom the reproach was peculiarly intended, replied with some heat; and Melina, at no time overstudious of delicacy and politeness, explained his grievances at last in words more plain than courteous. "It is now a fortnight," said he, "since we looked at the theatrical machinery and wardrobe which is lying pawned here: the whole might be redeemed for a very tolerable sum. You then gave me hopes that you would lend me so much; and hitherto I do not see that you have thought more of the matter, or come any nearer a determination. Had you then consented, we should ere now have been under way. Nor has your intention to leave the place been executed, nor has your money in the meantime been spared; at least there are people who have always skill to create opportunities for scattering it faster and faster away."

Such upbraidings, not altogether undeserved, touched Wilhelm to the quick. He replied with keenness, nay, with anger; and, as the company rose to part, he took hold of the door, and gave them not obscurely to understand that he would no longer continue with such unfriendly and ungrateful people. He hastened down, in no kindly humour, and seated himself upon the stone bench without the door of his inn; not observing, that, first out of mirth, then out of spleen, he had drunk more wine than usual.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER a short time, which he passed sitting looking out before him, disquieted by many thoughts, Philina came singing and skipping along through the front door. She sat down by him, nay, we might almost say, on him, so close did she press herself toward him: she leaned upon his shoulders, began playing with his hair, patted him, and gave him the best words in the world. She begged of him to stay with them, and not leave her alone in that company, or she must die of tedium: she could not live any longer in the same house with Melina, and had come over to lodge in the other inn for that reason.

He tried in vain to satisfy her with denials, — to make her understand that he neither could nor would remain any longer. She did not cease with her entreaties; nay, suddenly she threw her arm round his neck, and kissed him with the liveliest expression of fondness.

"Are you mad, Philina?" cried Wilhelm, endeavouring to disengage himself; "to make the open street the scene of such caresses, which I nowise merit! Let me go! I cannot and I will not stay."

"And I will hold thee fast," said she, "and kiss thee here on the open street, and kiss thee till thou promise what I want. I shall die of laughing," she continued: "by this familiarity the good people here must take me for thy wife of four weeks' standing; and husbands, who witness this touching scene, will commend

me to their wives as a pattern of childlike, simple tenderness."

Some persons were just then going by: she caressed him in the most graceful way; and he, to avoid giving scandal, was constrained to play the part of the patient husband. Then she made faces at the people, when their backs were turned, and, in the wildest humour, continued to commit all sorts of improprieties, till at last he was obliged to promise that he would not go that day, or the morrow, or the next day.

"You are a true clod!" said she, quitting him; "and I am but a fool to spend so much kindness on you." She arose with some vexation, and walked a few steps, then turned round laughing, and cried, "I believe it is just that, after all, that makes me so crazy about thee. I will but go and seek my knitting-needles and my stocking, that I may have something to do. Stay there, and let me find the stone man still upon the stone bench when I come back."

She cast a sparkling glance on him, and went into the house. He had no call to follow her; on the contrary, her conduct had excited fresh aversion in him; yet he rose from the bench to go after her, not well knowing why.

He was just entering the door, when Melina passed by, and spoke to him in a respectful tone, asking his pardon for the somewhat too harsh expressions he had used in their late discussion. "You will not take it ill of me," continued he, "if I appear perhaps too fretful in my present circumstances. The charge of providing for a wife, perhaps soon for a child, forbids me from day to day to live at peace, or spend my time as you may do, in the enjoyment of pleasant feelings. Consider, I pray you, and, if possible, do put me in possession of that stage machinery that is lying here. I shall not be your debtor long, and I shall be obliged to you while I live."

Our friend, unwilling to be kept upon the threshold, over which an irresistible impulse was drawing him at that moment to Philina, answered, with an absent mind, eager to be gone, and surprised into a transient feeling of good-will, "If I can make you happy and contented by doing this, I will hesitate no longer. Go you and put everything to rights. I shall be prepared this evening, or to-morrow morning, to pay the money." He then gave his hand to Melina in confirmation of his promise, and was very glad to see him hastily proceed along the street; but, alas! his entrance, which he now thought sure, was a second time prohibited, and more disagreeably than at first.

A young man, with a bundle on his back, came walking fast along the street, and advanced to Wilhelm, who at once recognised him for Friedrich.

"Here am I again!" cried he, looking with his large blue eyes joyfully up and down, over all the windows of the house. "Where is Mamsell? Devil take me, if I can stroll about the world any longer without seeing her!"

The landlord, joining them at this instant, replied that she was above; Friedrich, with a few bounds, was up-stairs; and Wilhelm continued standing, as if rooted to the threshold. At the first instant he was tempted to pluck the younker back, and drag him down by the hair; then all at once the spasm of a sharp jealousy stopped the current of his spirits and ideas; and, as he gradually recovered from this stupefaction, there came over him a splenetic fit of restlessness, a general discomfort, such as he had never felt in his life before.

He went up to his room, and found Mignon busy writing. For some time the creature had been labouring with great diligence in writing everything she knew by heart, giving always to her master and friend the papers to correct. She was indefatigable, and of good comprehension; but still, her letters were irregular,

and her lines crooked. Here, too, the body seemed to contradict the mind. In his usual moods, Wilhelm took no small pleasure in the child's attention; but, at the present moment, he regarded little what she showed him, — a piece of neglect which she felt the more acutely, as on this occasion she conceived her work had been accomplished with peculiar success.

Wilhelm's unrest drove him up and down the passages of the house, and finally again to the street door. A rider was just prancing toward it, — a man of good appearance, of middle age, and a brisk, contented look. The landlord ran to meet him, holding out his hand as to an old acquaintance. "Ay, Herr Stallmeister," cried he, "have we the pleasure to see you again?"

"I am only just going to bait with you," replied the stranger, "and then along to the estate, to get matters put in order as soon as possible. The count is coming over to-morrow with his lady; they mean to stay awhile to entertain the Prince von ——— in their best style: he intends to fix his headquarters in this neighbourhood for some time."

"It is pity," said the landlord, "that you cannot stop with us: we have good company in the house." The hostler came running out, and took the horse from the *Stallmeister*, who continued talking in the door with the landlord, and now and then giving a look at Wilhelm.

Our friend, observing that he formed the topic of their conversation, went away, and walked up and down the streets.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the restless vexation of his present humour, it came into his head to go and see the old harper; hoping by his music to scare away the evil spirits that tormented him. On asking for the man, he was directed to a mean public-house, in a remote corner of the little town; and, having mounted up-stairs there to the very garret, his ear caught the fine twanging of the harp coming from a little room before him. They were heart-moving, mournful tones, accompanied by a sad and dreary singing. Wilhelm glided to the door; and as the good old man was performing a sort of voluntary, the few stanzas of which, sometimes chanted, sometimes in recitative, were repeated more than once, our friend succeeded, after listening for awhile, in gathering nearly this:

"Who never ate his bread with tears,
Through nights of grief who, weeping, never
Sat on his bed, midst pangs and fears,
Can, heavenly powers, not know you ever.

"Ye lead us forth into this life,
Where comfort soon by guilt is banished,
Abandon us to tortures, strife;
For on this earth all guilt is punished."

— Editor's Version.

The heart-sick, plaintive sound of this lament pierced deep into the soul of the hearer. It seemed to him as

if the old man were often stopped from proceeding by his tears: his harp would alone be heard for a time, till his voice again joined it in low, broken tones. Wilhelm stood by the door; he was much moved; the mourning of this stranger had again opened the avenues of his heart; he could not resist the claim of sympathy, or restrain the tears which this woebegone complaint at last called forth. All the pains that pressed upon his soul seemed now at once to loosen from their hold: he abandoned himself without reserve to the feelings of the moment. Pushing up the door, he stood before the harper. The old man was sitting on a mean bed, the only seat, or article of furniture, which his miserable room afforded.

"What feelings thou hast awakened in me, good old man!" exclaimed he. "All that was lying frozen at my heart thou hast melted, and put in motion. Let me not disturb thee, but continue, in solacing thy own sorrows, to confer happiness upon a friend." The harper was about to rise, and say something; but Wilhelm hindered him, for he had noticed in the morning that the old man did not like to speak. He sat down by him on the straw bed.

The old man wiped his eyes, and asked, with a friendly smile, "How came you hither? I meant to wait upon you in the evening again."

"We are more quiet here," said Wilhelm. "Sing to me what thou pleasest, what accords with thy own mood of mind, only proceed as if I were not by. It seems to me, that to-day thou canst not fail to suit me. I think thee very happy, that, in solitude, thou canst employ and entertain thyself so pleasantly; that, being everywhere a stranger, thou findest in thy own heart the most agreeable society."

The old man looked upon his strings; and after touching them softly, by way of prelude, he commenced and sang:

"Who longs in solitude to live,
Ah! soon his wish will gain:
Men hope and love, men get and give,
And leave him to his pain.
Yes, leave me to my moan!
When from my bed
You all are fled,
I still am not alone.

"The lover glides with footstep light:
His love, is she not waiting there?
So glides to meet me, day and night,
In solitude my care,
In solitude my woe:
True solitude I then shall know
When lying in my grave,
When lying in my grave,
And grief has let me go."

We might describe with great prolixity, and yet fail to express the charms of, the singular conversation which Wilhelm carried on with this wayfaring stranger. To every observation our friend addressed to him, the old man, with the nicest accordance, answered in some melody, which awakened all the cognate emotions, and opened a wide field to the imagination.

Whoever has happened to be present at a meeting of certain devout people, who conceive, that, in a state of separation from the Church, they can edify each other in a purer, more affecting, and more spiritual manner, may form to himself some conception of the present scene. He will recollect how the leader of the meeting would append to his words some verse of a song, that raised the soul till, as he wished, she took wing; how another of the flock would erelong subjoin, in a different tune, some verse of a different song; and to this again a third would link some verse of a third song, — by which means the kindred ideas of the songs to which the verses belonged were indeed suggested, yet each passage by its new combination

became new and individualised, as if it had been first composed that moment; and thus from a well-known circle of ideas, from well-known songs and sayings, there was formed for that particular society, in that particular time, an original whole, by means of which their minds were animated, strengthened, and refreshed. So, likewise, did the old man edify his guest: by known and unknown songs and passages, he brought feelings near and distant, emotions sleeping and awake, pleasant and painful, into a circulation, from which, in Wilhelm's actual state, the best effects might be anticipated.

CHAPTER XIV.

ACCORDINGLY, in walking back, he began to think with greater earnestness than ever on his present situation: he had reached home with the firm purpose of altering it, when the landlord disclosed to him, by way of secret, that Mademoiselle Philina had made a conquest of the count's *Stallmeister*, who, after executing his commission at his master's estate, had returned in the greatest haste, and was even now partaking of a good supper with her up in her chamber.

At this very moment Melina came in with a notary: they went into Wilhelm's chamber together, where the latter, though with some hesitation, made his promise good; gave a draft of three hundred crowns to Melina, who, handing it to the lawyer, received in return a note acknowledging the sale of the whole theatrical apparatus, and engaging to deliver it next morning.

Scarcely had they parted, when Wilhelm heard a cry of horror rising from some quarter of the house. He caught the sound of a young voice, uttering menacing and furious tones, which were ever and anon choked by immoderate weeping and howling. He observed this frantic noise move hastily from above, go past his door, and down to the lower part of the house.

Curiosity enticing our friend to follow it, he found Friedrich in a species of delirium. The boy was weeping, grinding his teeth, stamping with his feet, threatening with clenched fists: he appeared beside himself from fury and vexation. Mignon was standing

opposite him, looking on with astonishment. The landlord, in some degree, explained this phenomenon.

The boy, he said, being well received at his return by Philina, seemed quite merry and contented: he had kept singing and jumping about, till the time when Philina grew acquainted with the *Stallmeister*. Then, however, this half-grown younker had begun to show his indignation, to slam the doors, and run up and down in the highest dudgeon. Philina had ordered him to wait at table that evening, upon which he had grown still sulkier and more indignant; till at last, carrying up a plate with a ragout, instead of setting it upon the table, he had thrown the whole between mademoiselle and her guest, who were sitting moderately close together at the time: and the *Stallmeister*, after two or three hearty cuffs, had then kicked him out of the room. He, the landlord, had himself helped to clean both of them; and certainly their clothes had suffered much.

On hearing of the good effect of his revenge, the boy began to laugh aloud, whilst the tears were still running down his cheeks. He heartily rejoiced for a time, till the disgrace which he had suffered from the stronger party once more came into his head, and he began afresh to howl and threaten.

Wilhelm stood meditating, and ashamed at this spectacle. It reflected back to him his own feelings, in coarser and exaggerated features: he, too, was inflamed with a fierce jealousy; and, had not decency restrained him, he would willingly have satisfied his wild humour; with malicious spleen would have abused the object of his passion, and called out his rival; he could have crushed in pieces all the people round him; they seemed as if standing there but to vex him.

Laertes also had come in, and heard the story: he roguishly spurred on the irritated boy, who was now

asserting with oaths that he would make the *Stallmeister* give him satisfaction; that he had never yet let any injury abide with him; that, should the man refuse, there were other ways of taking vengeance.

This was the very business for Laertes. He went up-stairs, with a solemn countenance, to call out the *Stallmeister* in the boy's name.

"This is a pleasant thing," said the *Stallmeister:* "such a joke as this I had scarcely promised myself to-night." They went down, and Philina followed them. "My son," said the *Stallmeister* to Friedrich, "thou art a brave lad, and I do not hesitate to fight thee. Only as our years and strength are unequal, and the attempt a little dangerous on that account, I propose a pair of foils in preference to other weapons. We can rub the buttons of them with a piece of chalk, and whoever marks upon the other's coat the first or the most thrusts, shall be held the victor, and be treated by the other with the best wine that can be had in town."

Laertes decided that the proposition might be listened to: Friedrich obeyed him, as his tutor. The foils were produced: Philina took a seat, went on with her knitting, and looked at the contending parties with the greatest peace of mind.

The *Stallmeister*, who could fence very prettily, was complaisant enough to spare his adversary, and to let a few chalk scores be marked upon his coat; after which the two embraced, and wine was ordered. The *Stallmeister* took the liberty of asking Friedrich's parentage and history; and Friedrich told him a long story, which had often been repeated already, and which, at some other opportunity, we purpose communicating to our readers.

To Wilhelm, in the meantime, this contest completed the representation of his own state of mind. He could not but perceive that he would willingly have taken

up a foil against the *Stallmeister*, — a sword still more willingly, though evidently much his inferior in the science of defence. Yet he deigned not to cast one look on Philina; he was on his guard against any word or movement that could possibly betray his feelings: and, after having once or twice done justice to the health of the duellists, he hastened to his own room, where a thousand painful thoughts came pressing round him.

He called to memory the time when his spirit, rich in hope, and full of boundless aims, was raised aloft, and encircled with the liveliest enjoyments of every kind as with its proper element. He now clearly saw, that of late he had fallen into a broken, wandering path, where, if he tasted, it was but in drops what he once quaffed in unrestricted measure. But he could not clearly see what insatiable want it was that nature had made the law of his being, and how this want had been only set on edge, half satisfied, and misdirected by the circumstances of his life.

It will not surprise us, therefore, that, in considering his situation, and labouring to extricate himself, he fell into the greatest perplexity. It was not enough, that by his friendship for Laertes, his attachment to Philina, his concern for Mignon, he had been detained longer than was proper in a place and a society where he could cherish his darling inclination, content his wishes as it were by stealth, and, without proposing any object, again pursue his early dreams. These ties he believed himself possessed of force enough to break asunder: had there been nothing more to hold him, he could have gone at once. But, only a few moments ago, he had entered into money transactions with Melina: he had seen that mysterious old man, the enigma of whose history he longed with unspeakable desire to clear. Yet of this too, after much balancing of reasons, he at length determined, or thought he had

determined, that it should not keep him back. "I must go." He threw himself into a chair: he felt greatly moved. Mignon came in, and asked whether she might help to undress him. Her manner was still and shy: it had grieved her to the quick to be so abruptly dismissed by him before.

Nothing is more touching than the first disclosure of a love which has been nursed in silence, of a faith grown strong in secret, and which at last comes forth in the hour of need, and reveals itself to him who formerly has reckoned it of small account. The bud, which had been closed so long and firmly, was now ripe to burst its swathings; and Wilhelm's heart could never have been readier to welcome the impressions of affection.

She stood before him, and noticed his disquietude. "Master!" she cried, "if thou art unhappy, what will become of Mignon?" "Dear little creature," said he, taking her hands, "thou, too, art part of my anxieties. I must go hence." She looked at his eyes, glistening with restrained tears, and knelt down with vehemence before him. He kept her hands: she laid her head upon his knees, and remained quite still. He played with her hair, patted her, and spoke kindly to her. She continued motionless for a considerable time. At last he felt a sort of palpitating movement in her, which began very softly, and then by degrees, with increasing violence, diffused itself over all her frame. "What ails thee, Mignon?" cried he: "What ails thee?" She raised her little head, looked at him, and all at once laid her hand upon her heart, with the countenance of one repressing the utterance of pain. He raised her up, and she fell upon his breast: he pressed her toward him, and kissed her. She replied not by any pressure of the hand, by any motion whatever. She held firmly against her heart, and all at once gave a cry, which was accompanied by spasmodic

movements of the body. She started up, and immediately fell down before him, as if broken in every joint. It was an excruciating moment. "My child!" cried he, raising her up, and clasping her fast, "my child, what ails thee?" The palpitations continued, spreading from the heart over all the lax and powerless limbs: she was merely hanging in his arms. All at once she again became quite stiff, like one enduring the sharpest corporeal agony; and soon with a new vehemence all her frame once more became alive; and she threw herself about his neck, like a bent spring that is closing; while in her soul, as it were, a strong rent took place, and at the same moment a stream of tears flowed from her shut eyes into his bosom. He held her fast. She wept, and no tongue can express the force of these tears. Her long hair had loosened, and was hanging down before her: it seemed as if her whole being was melting incessantly into a brook of tears. Her rigid limbs were again become relaxed; her inmost soul was pouring itself forth; in the wild confusion of the moment Wilhelm was afraid she would dissolve in his arms, and leave nothing there for him to grasp. He held her faster and faster. "My child!" cried he, "my child! thou art indeed mine, if that word can comfort thee. Thou art mine! I will keep thee, I will never forsake thee!" Her tears continued flowing. At last she raised herself: a faint gladness shone upon her face. "My father!" cried she, "thou wilt not forsake me? Wilt be my father? I am thy child!"

Softly, at this moment, the harp began to sound before the door: the old man brought his most affecting songs as an evening offering to our friend, who, holding his child ever faster in his arms, enjoyed the most pure and undescribable felicity.

Book III.

CHAPTER I.

"Dost know the land where citrons, lemons, grow,
Gold oranges 'neath dusky foliage glow,
From azure sky are blowing breezes soft,
The myrtles still, the laurel stands aloft?
'Tis there! 'tis there!
I would with thee, O my beloved one, go!

"Dost know the house, its roofs do columns bear,
The hall with splendour bright, the chambers glare?
Therein stand marble forms, and look at me:
What is't, poor child, that they have done to thee?
Dost know that house?
'Tis there! 'tis there!
I would with thee, O my protector, go!

"Dost know the mount, whose path with clouds is fraught,
Where by the mule through mist the way is sought,
Where dwell in caves the dragon's ancient brood,
Where falls the rock, and over it the flood, —
Dost know that mount?
'Tis there! 'tis there!
Does lead our road: O father, let us go!"

— *Editor's Version.*

NEXT morning, on looking for Mignon about the house, Wilhelm did not find her, but was informed that she had gone out early with Melina, who had risen betimes to receive the wardrobe and other apparatus of his theatre.

After the space of some hours, Wilhelm heard the sound of music before his door. At first he thought it was the harper come again to visit him; but he soon distinguished the tones of a cithern, and the voice

which began to sing was Mignon's. Wilhelm opened the door: the child came in, and sang him the song we have just given above.

The music and general expression of it pleased our friend extremely, though he could not understand all the words. He made her once more repeat the stanzas, and explain them: he wrote them down, and translated them into his native language. But the originality of its turns he could imitate only from afar: its childlike innocence of expression vanished from it in the process of reducing its broken phraseology to uniformity, and combining its disjointed parts. The charm of the tune, moreover, was entirely incomparable.

She began every verse in a stately and solemn manner, as if she wished to draw attention toward something wonderful, as if she had something weighty to communicate. In the third line, her tones became deeper and gloomier; the words, "*Dost know?*" were uttered with a show of mystery and eager circumspectness; in "*'Tis there! 'tis there!*" lay an irresistible longing; and her "*Let us go!*" she modified at each repetition, so that now it appeared to entreat and implore, now to impel and persuade.

On finishing her song for the second time, she stood silent for a moment, looked keenly at Wilhelm, and asked him, "*Know'st* thou the land?" "It must mean Italy," said Wilhelm: "where didst thou get the little song?" "Italy!" said Mignon, with an earnest air. "If thou go to Italy, take me along with thee; for I am too cold here." "Hast thou been there already, little dear?" said Wilhelm. But the child was silent, and nothing more could be got out of her.

Melina entered now: he looked at the cithern,— was glad that she had rigged it up again so prettily. The instrument had been among Melina's stage-gear: Mignon had begged it of him in the morning, and then gone to the old harper. On this occasion she had

shown a talent she was not before suspected of possessing.

Melina had already got possession of his wardrobe, with all that pertained to it: some members of the town magistracy had promised him permission to act, for a time, in the place. He was now returning with a merry heart and a cheerful look. His nature seemed altogether changed: he was soft, courteous to every one, — nay, fond of obliging, and almost attractive. He was happy, he said, at now being able to afford employment to his friends, who had hitherto lain idle and embarrassed; sorry, however, that at first he could not have it in his power to remunerate the excellent actors whom fortune had offered him, in a style corresponding to their talents and capacities; being under the necessity, before all other things, of discharging his debt to so generous a friend as Wilhelm had proved himself to be.

"I cannot describe," said he to Wilhelm, "the friendliness which you have shown, in helping me forward to the management of a theatre. When I found you here, I was in a very curious predicament. You recollect how strongly I displayed to you, on our first acquaintance, my aversion to the stage; and yet, on being married, I was forced to look about for a place in some theatre, out of love to my wife, who promised to herself much joy and great applause if so engaged. I could find none, at least no constant one; but in return I luckily fell in with some commercial men, who, in extraordinary cases, were enabled to employ a person that could handle his pen, that understood French, and was not without a little skill in ciphering. I managed pretty well in this way for a time; I was tolerably paid; got about me many things which I had need of, and did not feel ashamed of my work. But these commissions of my patrons came to an end; they could afford me no permanent establishment: and, ever

since, my wife has continued urging me still more to go upon the stage again; though, at present, alas! her own situation is none of the favourablest for exhibiting herself with honour in the eyes of the public. But now, I hope, the establishment which by your kind help I have the means of setting up, will prove a good beginning for me and mine: you I shall thank for all my future happiness, let matters turn out as they will."

Wilhelm listened to him with contentment: the whole fraternity of players were likewise moderately satisfied with the declarations of the new manager; they secretly rejoiced that an offer of employment had occurred so soon, and were disposed to put up at first with a smaller salary, the rather, that most of them regarded the present one, so unexpectedly placed within their reach, as a kind of supplement, on which a short while ago they could not count. Melina made haste to profit by this favourable temper: he endeavoured in a sly way to get a little talk with each in private, and ere-long had, by various methods, so cockered them all, that they did not hesitate to strike a bargain with him without loss of time; scarcely thinking of this new engagement, or reckoning themselves secure at worst of getting free again after six weeks' warning.

The terms were now to be reduced to proper form; and Melina was considering with what pieces he would first entice the public, when a courier riding up informed the *Stallmeister* that his lord and lady were at hand; on which the latter ordered out his horses.

In a short time after this, the coach with its masses of luggage rolled in; two servants sprang down from the coach-box before the inn; and Philina, according to her custom, foremost in the way of novelties, placed herself within the door.

"Who are you?" said the countess, entering the house.

"An actress, at your Excellency's service," was the answer; while the cheat, with a most innocent air, and looks of great humility, curtsied, and kissed the lady's gown.

The count, on seeing some other persons standing round, who also signified that they were players, inquired about the strength of their company, their last place of residence, their manager. "Had they but been Frenchmen," said he to his lady, "we might have treated the prince with an unexpected enjoyment, and entertained him with his favourite pastime at our house."

"And could we not," said the countess, "get these people, though unluckily they are but Germans, to exhibit with us at the castle while the prince stays there? Without doubt they have some degree of skill. A large party can never be so well amused with anything as with a theatre: besides, the baron would assist them."

So speaking, they went up-stairs; and Melina presented himself above, as manager. "Call your folk together," said the count, "and place them before me, that I may see what is in them. I must also have the list of pieces you profess to act."

Melina, with a low bow, hastened from the room, and soon returned with his actors. They advanced in promiscuous succession: some, out of too great anxiety to please, introduced themselves in a rather sorry style; the others, not much better, by assuming an air of unconcern. Philina showed the deepest reverence to the countess, who behaved with extreme graciousness and condescension: the count, in the meantime, was mustering the rest. He questioned each about his special province of acting, and signified to Melina that he must rigorously keep them to their several provinces, — a precept which the manager received with the greatest devotion.

The count then stated to each in particular what he ought especially to study, what about his figure or his postures ought to be amended; showed them luminously in what points the Germans always fail; and displayed such extraordinary knowledge, that all stood in the deepest humility, scarcely daring to draw their breath before so enlightened a critic and so right honourable a patron.

"What fellow is that in the corner?" said the count, looking at a subject who had not yet been presented to him, and who now approached, — a lean, shambling figure, with a rusty coat, patched at the elbows, and a woful periwig covering his submissive head.

This person, whom, from the last book, we know already as Philina's darling, had been wont to enact pedants, tutors, and poets, — generally undertaking parts in which any cudgelling or ducking was to be endured. He had trained himself to certain crouching, ludicrous, timid bows; and his faltering, stammering speech befitted the characters he played, and created laughter in the audience; so that he was always looked on as a useful member of the company, being moreover very serviceable and obliging. He approached the count in his own peculiar way, bent himself before him, and answered every question with the grimaces and gestures he was used to on the stage. The count looked at him for some time with an air of attentive satisfaction and studious observation; then, turning to the countess, "Child," said he, "consider this man well: I will engage for it he is a great actor, or may become so." The creature here, in the fulness of his heart, made an idiotic bow: the count burst into laughing, and exclaimed, "He does it excellently well! I bet this fellow can act anything he likes: it is pity that he has not been already used to something better."

So singular a prepossession was extremely galling to the rest: Melina alone felt no vexation, but completely

coincided with the count, and answered, with a prostrate look, "Alas! it is too true: both he and others of us have long stood in need of such encouragement, and such a judge, as we now find in your Excellency."

"Is this the whole company?" inquired the count.

"Some of them are absent," said the crafty Melina; "and at any rate, if we should meet with support, we could soon collect abundant numbers from the neighbourhood."

Philina in the meanwhile was saying to the countess, "There is a very pretty young man above, who without doubt would shortly become a first-rate amateur."

"Why does he not appear?" said the countess.

"I will bring him," cried Philina, hastening to the door.

She found our friend still occupied with Mignon: she persuaded him to come down. He followed her with some reluctance: yet curiosity impelled him; for, hearing that the family were people of rank, he longed much to know more of them. On entering the room, his eyes met those of the countess, which were directed toward him. Philina led him to the lady, while the count was busied with the rest. Wilhelm made his bow, and replied to several questions from the fair dame, not without confusion of mind. Her beauty and youth, her graceful dignity and refined manner, made the most delightful impression on him; and the more so, as her words and looks were accompanied with a certain bashfulness, one might almost say embarrassment. He was likewise introduced to the count, who, however, took no special notice of him, but went to the window with his lady, and seemed to ask her about something. It was easy to observe that her opinion accorded strongly with his own; that she even tried to persuade him, and strengthen him in his intentions.

In a short while he turned round to the company,

and said, "I must not stay at present, but I will send a friend to you; and if you make reasonable proposals, and will take very great pains, I am not disinclined to let you play at the castle."

All testified their joy at this: Philina in particular kissed the hands of the countess with the greatest vivacity.

"Look you, little thing," said the lady, patting the cheeks of the light-minded girl, "look you, child, you shall come to me again: I will keep my promise; only you must dress better." Philina stated in excuse that she had little to lay out upon her wardrobe; and the countess immediately ordered her waiting-maids to bring from the carriage a silk neckerchief and an English hat, the articles easiest to come at, and give them to her new favourite. The countess herself then decked Philina, who continued very neatly to support, by her looks and conduct, that saintlike, guiltless character she had assumed at first.

The count took his lady's hand, and led her down. She bowed to the whole company with a friendly air, in passing by them: she turned round again toward Wilhelm, and said to him, with the most gracious mien, "We shall soon meet again."

These happy prospects enlivened the whole party: every one of them gave free course to his hopes, his wishes, his imaginations; spoke of the parts he would play, and the applause he would acquire. Melina was considering how he might still, by a few speedy exhibitions, gain a little money from the people of the town before he left it; while others went into the kitchen, to order a better dinner than of late they had been used to.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER a few days the baron came, and it was not without fear that Melina received him. The count had spoken of him as a critic; and it might be dreaded, he would speedily detect the weakness of the little party, and see that it formed no efficient troop; there being scarcely a play which they could act in a suitable manner. But the manager, as well as all the members, were soon delivered from their cares, on finding that the baron was a man who viewed the German stage with a most patriotic enthusiasm, to whom every player, and every company of players, was welcome and agreeable. He saluted them all with great solemnity; was happy to come upon a German theatre so unexpectedly, to get connected with it, and to introduce their native Muses to the mansion of his relative. He then pulled out from his pocket a bundle of stitched papers, in which Melina hoped to find the terms of their contract specified; but it proved something very different. It was a drama, which the baron himself had composed, and wished to have played by them: he requested their attention while he read it. Willingly they formed a circle round him, charmed at being able with so little trouble to secure the favour of a man so important; though, judging by the thickness of the manuscript, it was clear that a very long rehearsal might be dreaded. Their apprehensions were not groundless: the piece was written in five acts, and that sort of acts which never have an end.

The hero was an excellent, virtuous, magnanimous,

rive little profit from the favourable breeze, and in the storm must soon become exhausted, and sink to the bottom. What convenience, what ease of movement, does a fortune we are born to confer upon us! How securely does a traffic flourish, which is founded on a solid capital, where the failure of one or of many enterprises does not of necessity reduce us to inaction! Who can better know the worth and worthlessness of earthly things, than he that has had within his choice the enjoyment of them from youth upwards? and who can earlier guide his mind to the useful, the necessary, the true, than he that may convince himself of so many errors in an age when his strength is yet fresh to begin a new career?"

Thus did our friend cry joy to all inhabitants of the upper regions, and, not to them only, but to all that were permitted to approach their circle, and draw water from their wells. So he thanked his own happy stars, that seemed preparing to grant this mighty blessing to himself.

Melina, in the meantime, was torturing his brains to get the company arranged according to their several provinces, and each of them appointed to produce his own peculiar effect. In compliance with the count's injunctions and his own persuasions, he made many efforts; but at last, when it came to the point of execution, he was forced to be content, if, in so small a troop, he found his people willing to adjust themselves to this or that part as they best were able. When matters would admit of it, Laertes played the lover; Philina the lady's maid; the two young girls took up between them the characters of the artless and tender loved ones; the boisterous old gentleman of the piece was sure to be the best acted. Melina himself thought he might come forth as chevalier; Madam Melina, to her no small sorrow, was obliged to satisfy herself with personating young wives, or even affec-

tionate mothers; and as in the newer plays, a poet or pedant is rarely introduced, and still more rarely for the purpose of being laughed at, the well-known favourite of the count was now usually transformed into president or minister, — these being commonly set forth as knaves, and severely handled in the fifth act. Melina, too, in the part of chamberlain or the like, introduced, with great satisfaction, the ineptitudes put into his hands by various honest Germans, according to use and wont, in many well-accepted plays: he delighted in these characters, because he had an opportunity of decking himself out in a fashionable style, and was called upon to assume the airs of a courtier, which he conceived himself to possess in great perfection.

It was not long till they were joined by several actors from different quarters; who, being received without very strict examination, were also retained without very burdensome conditions.

Wilhelm had been more than once assailed with persuasions from Melina to undertake an amateur part. This he declined; yet he interested and occupied himself about the general cause with great alacrity, without our new manager's acknowledging his labours in the smallest. On the contrary, it seemed to be Melina's opinion, that with his office he had at the same time picked up all the necessary skill for carrying it on. In particular, the task of curtailment formed one of his most pleasing occupations: he would succeed in reducing any given piece down to the regular measure of time, without the slightest respect to proprieties or proportions, or anything whatever, but his watch. He met with great encouragement; the public was very much delighted; the most knowing inhabitants of the burgh maintained, that the prince's theatre itself was not so well conducted as theirs.

CHAPTER III.

At last the time arrived when the company had to prepare for travelling, and to expect the coaches and other vehicles that were to carry them to the count's mansion. Much altercation now took place about the mode of travelling, and who should sit with whom. The ordering and distribution of the whole was at length settled and concluded, with great labour, and, alas! without effect. At the appointed hour, fewer coaches came than were expected: they had to accommodate themselves as the case would admit. The baron, who followed shortly afterward on horseback, assigned, as the reason, that all was in motion at the castle, not only because the prince was to arrive a few days earlier than had been looked for, but also because an unexpected party of visitors were already come: the place, he said, was in great confusion; on this account perhaps they would not lodge so comfortably as had been intended, — a change which grieved him very much.

Our travellers packed themselves into the carriages the best way they could; and the weather being tolerable, and the castle but a few leagues distant, the heartiest of the troop preferred setting out on foot to waiting the return of the coaches. The caravan got under way with great jubilee, for the first time without caring how the landlord's bill was to be paid. The count's mansion rose on their souls like a palace of the fairies: they were the happiest and merriest mortals in the world. Each throughout the journey, in his own peculiar mode, kept fastening a continued chain

of fortune, honour, and prosperity to that auspicious day.

A heavy rain, which fell unexpectedly, did not banish these delightful contemplations; though, as it incessantly continued with more and more violence, many of the party began to show traces of uneasiness. The night came on; and no sight could be more welcome than the palace of the count, which shone upon them from a hill at some distance, glancing with light in all its stories, so that they could reckon every window.

On approaching nearer, they found all the windows in the wings illuminated also. Each of the party thought within himself what chamber would be his; and most of them prudently determined to be satisfied with a room in the attic, or some of the side buildings.

They were now proceeding through the village, past the inn. Wilhelm stopped the coach, in the mind to alight there; but the landlord protested that it was not in his power to afford the least accommodation: his lordship the count, he said, being visited by some unexpected guests, had immediately engaged the whole inn; every chamber in the house had been marked with chalk last night, specifying who was to lodge there. Our friend was accordingly obliged, against his will, to travel forward to the castle with the rest of the company.

In one of the side buildings, round the kitchen fire, they noticed several cooks running busily about, — a sight which refreshed them not a little. Servants came jumping hastily with lights to the staircase of the main door, and the hearts of the worthy pilgrims overflowed at the aspect of such honours. But how great was their surprise, when this cordial reception changed into a storm of curses. The servants scouted the coachman for driving in hither; they must wheel out again, it was bawled, and take their loading round

to the old castle; there was no room here for such guests! To this unfriendly and unexpected dismissal, they joined all manner of jeering, and laughed aloud at each other for leaping out in the rain on so false an errand. It was still pouring; no star was visible in the sky; while our company were dragged along a rough, jolting road, between two walls, into the old mansion, which stood behind, inhabited by none since the present count's father had built the new residence in front of it. The carriages drew up, partly in the courtyard, partly in a long, arched gateway; and the postilions, people hired from the village, unyoked their horses, and rode off.

As nobody came forward to receive the travellers, they alighted from their places, they shouted, and searched. In vain! All continued dark and still. The wind swept through the lofty gate: the court and the old towers were lying gray and dreary, and so dim that their forms could scarcely be distinguished in the gloom. The people were all shuddering and freezing; the women were becoming frightened; the children began to cry; the general impatience was increasing every minute; so quick a revolution of fortune, for which no one of them had been at all prepared, entirely destroyed their equanimity.

Expecting every minute that some person would appear and unbolt the doors, mistaking at one time the pattering of rain, at another the rocking of the wind, for the much-desired footstep of the castle bailiff, they continued downcast and inactive: it occurred to none of them to go into the new mansion, and there solicit help from charitable souls. They could not understand where their friend the baron was lingering: they were in the most disconsolate condition.

At last some people actually arrived: by their voices, they were recognised as the pedestrians who had fallen behind the others on the journey. They intimated

that the baron had tumbled with his horse, and hurt his leg severely; and that, on calling at the castle, they, too, had been roughly directed hither.

The whole company were in extreme perplexity: they guessed and speculated as to what should now be done, but they could fix on nothing. At length they noticed from afar a lantern advancing, and took fresh breath at sight of it; but their hopes of quick deliverance again evaporated, when the object approached, and came to be distinctly seen. A groom was lighting the well-known *Stallmeister* of the castle toward them: this gentleman, on coming nearer, very anxiously inquired for Mademoiselle Philina. No sooner had she stepped forth from the crowd, than he very pressingly offered to conduct her to the new mansion, where a little place had been provided for her with the countess's maids. She did not hesitate long about accepting his proposal; she caught his arm, and, recommending her trunk to the care of the rest, was going to hasten off with him directly: but the others intercepted them, asking, entreating, conjuring the *Stallmeister;* till at last, to get away with his fair one, he promised everything, assuring them, that, in a little while, the castle should be opened, and they lodged in the most comfortable manner. In a few moments they saw the glimmer of his lantern vanish: they long looked in vain for another gleam of light. At last, after much watching, scolding, and reviling, it actually appeared, and revived them with a touch of hope and consolation.

An ancient footman opened the door of the old edifice, into which they rushed with violence. Each of them now strove to have his trunk unfastened, and brought in beside him. Most of this luggage, like the persons of its owners, was thoroughly wetted. Having but a single light, the process of unpacking went on very slowly. In the dark passages they pushed against

each other, they stumbled, they fell. They begged to have more lights, they begged to have some fuel. The monosyllabic footman, with much ado, consented to put down his own lantern; then went his way, and came not again.

They now began to investigate the edifice. The doors of all the rooms were open: large stoves, tapestry hangings, inlaid floors, yet bore witness to its former pomp; but of other house-gear there was none to be seen, — no table, chair, or mirror, nothing but a few monstrous, empty bedsteads, stripped of every ornament and every necessary. The wet trunks and knapsacks were adopted as seats: a part of the tired wanderers placed themselves upon the floor. Wilhelm had sat down upon some steps: Mignon lay upon his knees. The child was restless; and, when he asked what ailed her, she answered, "I am hungry." He himself had nothing that could still the craving of the child: the rest of the party had consumed their whole provision, so he was obliged to leave the little traveller without refreshment. Through the whole adventure he had been inactive, silently immersed in thought. He was very sullen, and full of indignant regret that he had not kept by his first determination, and remained at the inn, though he should have slept in the garret.

The rest demeaned themselves in various ways. Some of them had got a heap of old wood collected within a vast, gaping chimney in the hall: they set fire to the pile with great huzzaing. Unhappily, however, their hopes of warming and drying themselves by means of it were mocked in the most frightful manner. The chimney, it appeared, was there for ornament alone, and was walled up above; so the smoke rushed quickly back, and at once filled the whole chamber. The dry wood rose crackling into flames; the flame was also driven back; the draught

sweeping through the broken windows gave it a wavering direction. Terrified lest the castle should catch fire, the unhappy guests had to tear the burning sticks asunder, to smother and trample them under their feet; the smoke increased; their case was rendered more intolerable than before; they were driven to the brink of desperation.

Wilhelm had retreated from the smoke into a distant chamber, to which Mignon soon followed him, leading in a well-dressed servant, with a high, clear, double-lighted lantern in his hand. He turned to Wilhelm, and, holding out to him some fruits and confectionery on a beautiful porcelain plate, "The young lady up-stairs," said he, "sends you this, with the request that you would join her party: she bids me tell you," added the lackey, with a sort of grin, "that she is very well off yonder, and wishes to divide her enjoyments with her friends."

Wilhelm had not at all expected such a message; for, ever since the adventure on the stone bench, he had treated Philina with the most decided contempt. He was still so resolute to have no more concern with her that he thought of sending back her dainty gifts untasted, when a supplicating look of Mignon's induced him to accept them. He returned his thanks in the name of the child. The invitation he entirely rejected. He desired the servant to exert himself a little for the stranger company, and made inquiry for the baron. The latter, he was told, had gone to bed, but had already, as the lackey understood, given orders to some other person to take charge of these unfortunate and ill-lodged gentlemen.

The servant went away, leaving one of his lights, which Wilhelm, in the absence of a candlestick, contrived to fix upon the window-casement; and now, at least in his meditations, he could see the four walls of his chamber. Nor was it long till preparations

were commenced for conducting our travellers to rest. Candles arrived by degrees, though without snuffers; then a few chairs; an hour afterward came bedclothes; then pillows, all well steeped in rain. It was far past midnight when straw beds and mattresses were produced, which, if sent at first, would have been extremely welcome.

In the interim, also, somewhat to eat and drink had been brought in: it was enjoyed without much criticism; though it looked like a most disorderly collection of remains, and offered no very singular proof of the esteem in which our guests were held.

CHAPTER IV.

The disorders and mischievous tricks of some frolicsome companions still further augmented the disquietudes and distresses of the night: these gay people woke each other; each played a thousand giddy pranks to plague his fellow. The next morning dawned amid loud complaints against their friend the baron, for having so deceived them, for having given so very false a notion of the order and comfort that awaited their arrival. However, to their great surprise and consolation, at an early hour the count himself, attended by a few servants, made his entrance, and inquired about their circumstances. He appeared much vexed on discovering how badly they had fared; and the baron, who came limping along, supported on the arm of a servant, bitterly accused the steward for neglecting his commands on this occasion, — showing great anxiety to have that person punished for his disobedience.

The count gave immediate orders that everything should be arranged, in his presence, to the utmost possible convenience of the guests. While this was going on, some officers arrived, who forthwith scraped acquaintance with the actresses. The count assembled all the company before him, spoke to each by name, introduced a few jokes among his observations; so that every one was charmed at the gracious condescension of his lordship. At last it came to Wilhelm's turn. He appeared with Mignon holding by his hand. Our friend excused himself, in the best terms he could,

for the freedom he had taken. The count, on the other hand, spoke as if the visit had been looked for.

A gentleman, who stood beside the count, and who, although he wore no uniform, appeared to be an officer, conversed with Wilhelm: he was evidently not a common man. His large, keen blue eyes, looking out from beneath a high brow; his light-coloured hair, thrown carelessly back; his middle stature; everything about him, — showed an active, firm, and decisive mode of being. His questions were lively. He seemed to be at home in all that he inquired about.

Wilhelm asked the baron what this person was, but found that he had little good to say of him. "He held the rank of major, was the special favourite of the prince; managed his most secret affairs; was, in short, regarded as his right arm, — nay, there was reason to believe him the prince's natural son. He had been on embassies in France, England, Italy. In all those places he had greatly distinguished himself, by which means he was grown conceited; imagining, among other pretensions, that he thoroughly understood the literature of Germany, and allowing himself to vent all kinds of sorry jests upon it. He, the baron, was in the habit of avoiding all intercourse with him; and Wilhelm would do well to imitate that conduct, for it somehow happened that no one could be near him without being punished for it. He was called Jarno, though nobody knew rightly what to make of such a name."

Wilhelm had nothing to urge against all this: he had felt a sort of inclination for the stranger, though he noticed in him something cold and repulsive.

The company being arranged and distributed throughout the castle, Melina issued the strictest orders that they should behave themselves with decency, the women live in a separate quarter, and each direct his whole attention to the study of dramatic art,

and of the characters he had to play. He posted up written ordinances, consisting of many articles, upon all the doors. He settled the amount of fine which should be levied upon each transgressor, and put into a common box.

This edict was but little heeded. Young officers went out and in; they jested, not in the most modest fashion, with the actresses; made game of the actors, and annihilated the whole system of police before it had the smallest time to take root in the community. The people ran chasing one another through the rooms; they changed clothes; they disguised themselves. Melina, attempting to be rigorous with a few at first, was exasperated by every sort of insolence; and, when the count soon after sent for him to come and view the place where his theatre was to be erected, matters grew worse and worse. The young gentry devised a thousand broad jokes: by the help of some actors, they became yet coarser. It seemed as if the old castle had been altogether given up to an infuriate host, and the racket did not end till dinner.

Meanwhile, the count had led Melina over to a large hall, which, though belonging to the old castle, communicated by a gallery with the new one: it seemed very well adapted for being changed into a little theatre. Here the sagacious lord of the mansion pointed out in person how he wanted everything to be.

The labour now commenced in the greatest haste; the stage apparatus was erected and furbished up; what decorations they had brought along with them and could employ were set in order, and what was wanting was prepared by some skilful workmen of the count's. Wilhelm likewise put his hand to the business; he assisted in settling the perspective, in laying off the outlines of the scenery: he was very anxious that nothing should be executed clumsily. The count,

who frequently came in to inspect their progress, was highly satisfied: he showed particularly how they should proceed in every case, displaying an uncommon knowledge of all the arts they were concerned with.

Next began the business of rehearsing, in good earnest; and there would have been enough of space and leisure for this undertaking, had the actors not continually been interrupted by the presence of visitors. Some new guests were daily arriving, and each insisted on viewing the operations of the company.

CHAPTER V.

THE baron had, for several days, been cheering Wilhelm with the hope of being formally presented to the countess. "I have told this excellent lady," said he, "so much about the talent and fine sentiment displayed in your compositions, that she feels quite impatient to see you, and hear one or two of them read. Be prepared, therefore, to come over at a moment's notice; for, the first morning she is at leisure, you will certainly be called on." He then pointed out to him the afterpiece it would be proper to produce on that occasion; adding, that doubtless it would recommend him to no usual degree of favour. The lady, he declared, was extremely sorry that a guest like him had happened to arrive at a time of such confusion, when they could not entertain him in a style more suitable to his merits and their own wishes.

In consequence of this information, Wilhelm, with the most sedulous attention, set about preparing the piece, which was to usher him into the great world. "Hitherto," said he, "thou hast laboured in silence for thyself, applauded only by a small circle of friends. Thou hast for a time despaired of thy abilities, and are yet full of anxious doubts whether even thy present path is the right one, and whether thy talent for the stage at all corresponds with thy inclination for it. In the hearing of such practised judges, in the closet where no illusion can take place, the attempt is far more hazardous than elsewhere; and yet I would not willingly recoil from the experiment: I could wish to

add this pleasure to my former enjoyments, and, if it might be, to give extension and stability to my hopes from the future."

He accordingly went through some pieces; read them with the keenest critical eye; made corrections here and there; recited them aloud, that he might be perfect in his tones and expression: and finally selected the work which he was best acquainted with, and hoped to gain most honour by. He put it in his pocket, one morning, on being summoned to attend the countess.

The baron had assured him that there would be no one present but the lady herself and a worthy female friend of hers. On entering the chamber, the Baroness von C—— advanced with great friendliness to meet him, expressed her happiness at gaining his acquaintance, and introduced him to the countess, who was then under the hands of her hair-dresser. The countess received him with kind words and looks. But it vexed him to see Philina kneeling at her chair, and playing a thousand fooleries. "The poor child," said the baroness, "has just been singing to us. Finish the song you were in the midst of: we should not like to lose it."

Wilhelm listened to her quavering with great patience, being anxious for the *friseur's* departure before he should begin to read. They offered him a cup of chocolate, the baroness herself handing him the biscuit. Yet, in spite of these civilities, he relished not his breakfast: he was longing too eagerly to lay before the lovely countess some performance that might interest and gratify her. Philina, too, stood somewhat in his way: on former occasions, while listening to him, she had more than once been troublesome. He looked at the *friseur* with a painful feeling, hoping every moment that the tower of curls would be complete.

Meanwhile the count came in, and began to talk of the fresh visitors he was expecting, of the day's occupations or amusements, and of various domestic matters that were started. On his retiring, some officers sent to ask permission of the countess to pay their respects to her, as they had to leave the castle before dinner. The footman having come to his post at the door, she permitted him to usher in the gentlemen.

The baroness, amid these interruptions, took pains to entertain our friend, and showed him much consideration; all which he accepted with becoming reverence, though not without a little absence of mind. He often felt for the manuscript in his pocket, and hoped for his deliverance every instant. He was almost losing patience, when a man-milliner was introduced, and immediately began without mercy to open his papers, bags, and bandboxes; pressing all his various wares upon the ladies, with an importunity peculiar to that species of creature.

The company increased. The baroness cast a look at Wilhelm, and then whispered with the countess: he noticed this, but did not understand the purpose of it. The whole, however, became clear enough, when, after an hour of painful and fruitless endurance, he went away. He then found a beautiful pocketbook, of English manufacture, in his pocket. The baroness had dexterously put it there without his notice; and soon afterward the countess's little black came out, and handed him an elegantly flowered waistcoat, without very clearly saying whence it came.

CHAPTER VI.

THIS mingled feeling of vexation and gratitude spoiled the remainder of his day; till, toward evening, he once more found employment. Melina informed him that the count had been speaking of a little prelude, which he wished to have produced in honour of the prince, on the day of his Highness's arrival. He meant to have the great qualities of this noble hero and philanthropist personified in the piece. These Virtues were to advance together, to recite his praises, and finally to encircle his bust with garlands of flowers and laurels; behind which a transparency might be inserted, representing the princely hat, and his name illuminated on it. The count, Melina said, had ordered him to take charge of getting ready the verses and other arrangements; and Wilhelm, he hoped, to whom it must be an easy matter, would stand by him on this occasion.

"What!" exclaimed our friend, in a splenetic tone, "have we nothing but portraits, illuminated names, and allegorical figures, to show in honour of a prince, who, in my opinion, merits quite a different eulogy? How can it flatter any reasonable man to see himself set up in effigy, and his name glimmering on oiled paper? I am very much afraid that your allegories, particularly in the present state of the wardrobe, will furnish occasion for many ambiguities and jestings. If you mean, however, to compose the play, or have it composed, I can have nothing to object; only I desire to have no part or lot in the matter."

Melina excused himself; alleging this to be only a casual hint of his lordship the count, who for the rest had left the arrangement of the piece entirely in their own hands. "With all my heart," replied our friend, "will I contribute something to the pleasure of this noble family: my Muse has never had so pleasant an employment as to sing, though in broken numbers, the praises of a prince who merits so much veneration. I will think of the matter: perhaps I may be able to contrive some way of bringing out our little troop, so as at least to produce some effect."

From this moment Wilhelm eagerly reflected on his undertaking. Before going to sleep he had got it all reduced to some degree of order; early next morning his plan was ready, the scenes laid out; a few of the most striking passages and songs were even versified and written down.

As soon as he was dressed, our friend made haste to wait upon the baron, to submit the plan to his inspection, and take his advice upon certain points connected with it. The baron testified his approbation of it, but not without considerable surprise. For, on the previous evening, he had heard his lordship talk of having ordered some quite different piece to be prepared and versified.

"To me it seems improbable," replied our friend, "that it could be his lordship's wish to have the piece got ready, exactly as he gave it to Melina. If I am not mistaken, he intended merely to point out to us from a distance the path we were to follow. The amateur and critic shows the artist what is wanted, and then leaves to him the care of producing it by his own means."

"Not at all," replied the baron: "his lordship understands that the piece shall be composed according to that and no other plan which he has himself prescribed. Yours has, indeed, a remote similarity with

his idea; but if we mean to accomplish our purpose, and get the count diverted from his first thought, we shall need to employ the ladies in the matter. The baroness especially contrives to execute such operations in the most masterly manner: the question is now, whether your plan shall so please her, that she will undertake the business; in that case it will certainly succeed."

"We need the assistance of the ladies," said our friend, "at any rate; for neither our company nor our wardrobe would suffice without them. I have counted on some pretty children, that are running up and down the house, and belong to certain of the servants."

He then desired the baron to communicate his plan to the ladies. The baron soon returned with intelligence that they wished to speak with Wilhelm personally. That same evening, when the gentlemen sat down to play, which, owing to the arrival of a certain general, was expected to be deeper and keener than usual, the countess and her friend, under pretext of some indisposition, would retire to their chamber, where Wilhelm, being introduced by a secret staircase, might submit his project without interruption. This sort of mystery, the baron said, would give the adventure a peculiar charm; in particular the baroness was rejoicing like a child in the prospect of their rendezvous, and the more so, because it was to be accomplished secretly, and against the inclination of the count.

Toward evening, at the appointed time, Wilhelm was sent for, and led in with caution. As the baroness advanced to meet him in a small cabinet, the manner of their interview brought former happy scenes for a moment to his mind. She conducted him along to the countess's chamber, and they now proceeded earnestly to question and investigate. He exhibited his plan with the utmost warmth and vivacity, so that his fair audience were quite decided in its

favour. Our readers also will permit us to present a brief sketch of it here.

The play was to open with a dance of children in some rural scene, — their dance representing that particular game wherein each has to wheel round, and gain the other's place. This was to be followed by several variations of their play; till at last, in performing a dance of the repeating kind, they were all to sing a merry song.

Here the old harper with Mignon was to enter, and, by the curiosity which they excited, gather several countrypeople round them; the harper would sing various songs in praise of peace, repose, and joy; and Mignon would then dance the egg-dance.

In these innocent delights, they are disturbed by the sound of martial music; and the party are surprised by a troop of soldiers. The men stand on the defensive, and are overcome: the girls flee, and are overtaken. In the tumult all seems going to destruction, when a person (about whose form and qualities the poet was not yet determined) enters, and, by signifying that the general is near, restores composure. Whereupon the hero's character is painted in the finest colours; security is promised in the midst of arms; violence and lawless disorder are now to be restrained. A universal festival is held in honour of the noble-minded captain.

The countess and her friend expressed great satisfaction with the plan; only they maintained that there must of necessity be something of allegory introduced, to make it palatable to his lordship. The baron proposed that the leader of the soldiers should be represented as the Genius of Dissension and Violence; that Minerva should then advance to bind fetters on him, to give notice of the hero's approach, and celebrate his praise. The baroness undertook the task of persuading the count that this plan was the one pro-

posed by himself, with a few alterations; at the same time expressly stipulating, that without fail, at the conclusion of the piece, the bust, the illuminated name, and the princely hat should be exhibited in due order; since otherwise, her attempt was vain.

Wilhelm had already figured in his mind how delicately and how nobly he would have the praises of his hero celebrated in the mouth of Minerva, and it was not without a long struggle that he yielded in this point. Yet he felt himself delightfully constrained to yield. The beautiful eyes of the countess, and her lovely demeanour, would easily have moved him to sin against his conscience as a poet; to abandon the finest and most interesting invention, the keenly wished-for unity of his composition, and all its most suitable details. His conscience as a burgher had a trial no less hard to undergo, when the ladies, in distributing the characters, pointedly insisted that he must undertake one himself.

Laertes had received for his allotment the part of that violent war-god; Wilhelm was to represent the leader of the peasants, who had some very pretty and tender verses to recite. After long resistance he was forced to comply: he could find no excuse, when the baroness protested that their stage was in all respects to be regarded as a private one, and that she herself would very gladly play on it, if they could find her a fit occasion. On receiving his consent, they parted with our friend on the kindest terms. The baroness assured him that he was an incomparable man: she accompanied him to the little stairs, and wished him good night with a squeeze of the hand.

CHAPTER VII.

THE interest in his undertakings, which the countess and her friend expressed and felt so warmly, quickened Wilhelm's faculties and zeal: the plan of his piece, which the process of describing it had rendered more distinct, was now present in the most brilliant vividness before his mind. He spent the greater part of that night, and the whole of next morning, in the sedulous versification of the dialogue and songs.

He had proceeded a considerable way, when a message came, requiring his attendance in the castle: the noble company, who were then at breakfast, wished to speak with him. As he entered the parlour, the baroness advanced to meet him, and, under pretext of wishing him good morning, whispered cunningly, "Say nothing of your piece but what you shall be asked."

"I hear," cried the count to him, "that you are very busy working at my prelude, which I mean to present in honour of the prince. I consent that you introduce a Minerva into it; and we are just thinking beforehand how the goddess shall be dressed, that we may not blunder in costume. For this purpose I am causing them to fetch from the library all the books that contain any figures of her."

At the same instant, one or two servants entered the parlour, with a huge basket full of books of every shape and appearance.

Montfaucon, the collections of antique statues, gems, and coins, all sorts of mythological writings, were turned up, and their plates compared. But this was not enough. The count's faithful memory recalled to

him all the Minervas to be found in frontispieces, vignettes, or anywhere else; and book after book was, in consequence, carried from the library, till finally the count was sitting in a chaos of volumes. Unable at last to recollect any other figure of Minerva, he observed with a smile, "I durst bet, that now there is not a single Minerva in all the library; and perhaps it is the first time that a collection of books has been so totally deprived of the presence of its patron goddess."

The whole company were merry at this thought: Jarno particularly, who had all along been spurring on the count to call for more and more books, laughed quite immoderately.

"Now," said the count, turning to Wilhelm, "one chief point is, — which goddess do you mean? Minerva, or Pallas? The goddess of war, or of the arts?"

"Would it not be best, your Excellency," said Wilhelm, "if we were not clearly to express ourselves on this head; if, since the goddess plays a double part in the ancient mythology, we also exhibited her here in a double quality? She announces a warrior, but only to calm the tumults of the people; she celebrates a hero by exalting his humanity; she conquers violence, and restores peace and security."

The baroness, afraid lest Wilhelm might betray himself, hastily pushed forward the countess's tailor, to give his opinion how such an antique robe could best be got ready. This man, being frequently employed in making masquerade dresses, very easily contrived the business: and as Madam Melina, notwithstanding her advanced state of pregnancy, had undertaken to enact the celestial virgin, the tailor was directed to take her measure; and the countess, though with some reluctance, selected from the wardrobe the clothes he was to cut up for that purpose.

The baroness, in her dexterous way, again contrived to lead Wilhelm aside, and let him know that she had

been providing all the other necessaries. Shortly afterward she sent him the musician, who had charge of the count's private band; and this professor set about composing what airs were wanted, or choosing from his actual stock such tunes as appeared suitable. From this time all went on according to the wishes of our friend; the count made no more inquiries about the piece; being altogether occupied with the transparent decoration, destined to surprise the spectators at the conclusion of the play. His inventive genius, aided by the skill of his confectioner, produced, in fact, a very pretty article. In the course of his travels, the count had witnessed the most splendid exhibitions of this sort: he had also brought home with him a number of copper-plates and drawings, and could sketch such things with considerable taste.

Meanwhile Wilhelm finished the play, gave every one his part, and began the study of his own. The musician also, having great skill in dancing, prepared the ballet; so that everything proceeded as it ought.

Yet one unexpected obstacle occurred, which threatened to occasion an unpleasant gap in the performance. He had promised to himself a striking effect from Mignon's egg-dance, and was much surprised when the child, with her customary dryness of manner, refused to dance; saying she was now his, and would no more go upon the stage. He sought to move her by every sort of persuasion, and did not discontinue his attempt till she began weeping bitterly, fell at his feet, and cried out, "Dearest father! stay thou from the boards thyself!" Little heeding this caution, he studied how to give the scene some other turn that might be equally interesting.

Philina, whose appointment was to act one of the peasant girls, and in the concluding dance to give the single-voice part of the song, and lead the chorus, felt exceedingly delighted that it had been so ordered. In

other respects, too, her present life was altogether to her mind: she had her separate chamber; was constantly beside the countess, entertaining her with fooleries, and daily received some present for her pains. Among other things, a dress had been expressly made for her wearing in this prelude. And being of a light, imitative nature, she quickly marked in the procedure of the ladies whatever would befit herself: she had of late grown all politeness and decorum. The attentions of the *Stallmeister* augmented rather than diminished; and as the officers also paid zealous court to her, living in so genial an element, it came into her head for once in her life to play the prude, and, in a quiet, gradual way, to take upon herself a certain dignity of manner to which she had not before aspired. Cool and sharp-sighted as she was, eight days had not elapsed till she knew the weak side of every person in the house; so that, had she possessed the power of acting from any constant motive, she might very easily have made her fortune. But on this occasion, as on all others, she employed her advantages merely to divert herself, — to procure a bright to-day, and be impertinent, wherever she observed that impertinence was not attended with danger.

The parts were now committed to memory: a rehearsal of the piece was ordered; the count purposed to be present at it, and his lady began to feel anxious how he might receive it. The baroness called Wilhelm to her privately. The nearer the hour approached, they all displayed the more perplexity; for the truth was, that, of the count's original idea, nothing whatever had been introduced. Jarno, who joined them while consulting together, was admitted to the secret. He felt amused at the contrivance, and was heartily disposed to offer the ladies his good services in carrying it through. "It will go hard," said he, "if you cannot extricate yourselves without help from this

affair; but, at all events, I will wait, as a body of reserve." The baroness then told them how she had on various occasions recited the whole piece to the count, but only in fragments and without order; that consequently he was prepared for each individual passage, yet certainly possessed with the idea that the whole would coincide with his original conception. "I will sit by him," said she, "to-night at the rehearsal, and study to divert his attention. The confectioner I have engaged already to make the decoration as beautiful as possible, but as yet he has not quite completed it."

"I know of a court," said Jarno, "where I wish we had a few such active and prudent friends as you. If your skill to-night will not suffice, give me a signal: I will take out the count, and not let him in again till Minerva enter; and you have speedy aid to expect from the illumination. For a day or two I have had something to report to him about his cousin, which for various reasons I have hitherto postponed. It will give his thoughts another turn, and that none of the pleasantest."

Business hindered the count from being present when the play began; the baroness amused him after his arrival: Jarno's help was not required. For as the count had abundance of employment in pointing out improvements, rectifying and arranging the detached parts, he entirely forgot the purport of the whole; and, as at last Madam Melina advanced, and spoke according to his heart, and the transparency did well, he seemed completely satisfied. It was not till the whole was finished, and his guests were sitting down to cards, that the difference appeared to strike him; and he began to think whether, after all, this piece was actually of his invention. At a signal from the baroness, Jarno then came forward into action; the evening passed away; the intelligence of the prince's

approach was confirmed; the people rode out more than once to see his vanguard encamping in the neighbourhood; the house was full of noise and tumult; and our actors, not always served in the handsomest manner by unwilling servants, had to pass their time in practisings and expectations at their quarters in the old mansion, without any one particularly taking thought about them.

CHAPTER VIII.

At length the prince arrived, with all his generals, staff-officers, and suite accompanying him. These, and the multitude of people coming to visit or do business with him, made the castle like a beehive on the point of swarming. All pressed forward to behold a man no less distinguished by his rank than by his great qualities, and all admired his urbanity and condescension: all were astonished at finding the hero and the leader of armies also the most accomplished and attractive courtier.

By the count's orders, the inmates of the castle were required to be all at their posts when the prince arrived; not a player was allowed to show himself, that his Highness might have no anticipation of the spectacle prepared to welcome him. Accordingly, when at evening he was led into the lofty hall, glowing with light, and adorned with tapestries of the previous century, he seemed not at all prepared to expect a play, and still less a prelude in honour of himself. Everything went off as it should have done: at the conclusion of the show, the whole troop were called and presented individually to the prince, who contrived, with the most pleasing and friendly air, to put some question, or make some remark, to every one of them. Wilhelm, as author of the piece, was particularly noticed, and had his tribute of applause liberally paid him.

The prelude being fairly over, no one asked another word about it: in a few days, it was as if it never had existed; except that occasionally Jarno spoke of it to

Wilhelm, judiciously praised it, adding, however, "It is pity you should play with hollow nuts, for a stake of hollow nuts." This expression stuck in Wilhelm's mind for several days: he knew not how to explain it, or what to infer from it.

Meanwhile the company kept acting every night, as well as their capacities permitted; each doing his utmost to attract the attention of spectators. Undeserved applauses cheered them on: in their old castle they fully believed, that the great assemblage was crowding thither solely on their account; that the multitude of strangers was allured by their exhibitions; that *they* were the centre round which, and by means of which, the whole was moving and revolving.

Wilhelm alone discovered, to his sorrow, that directly the reverse was true. For although the prince had waited out the first exhibitions, sitting on his chair, with the greatest conscientiousness, yet by degrees he grew remiss in his attendance, and seized every plausible occasion of withdrawing. And those very people whom Wilhelm, in conversation, had found to be the best informed and most sensible, with Jarno at their head, were wont to spend but a few transitory moments in the hall of the theatre; sitting for the rest of their time in the antechamber, gaming, or seeming to employ themselves in business.

Amid all his persevering efforts, to want the wished and hoped for approbation grieved Wilhelm very deeply. In the choice of plays, in transcribing the parts, in numerous rehearsals, and whatever further could be done, he zealously coöperated with Melina, who, being in secret conscious of his own insufficiency, at length acknowledged and pursued these counsels. His own parts Wilhelm diligently studied, and executed with vivacity and feeling, and with all the propriety the little training he had yet received would allow.

At the same time, the unwearied interest the baron took in their performances obliterated every doubt from the minds of the rest of the company: he assured them that their exhibitions were producing the deepest effect, especially while one of his own pieces had been representing; only he was grieved to say, the prince showed an exclusive inclination for the French theatre; while a part of his people, among whom Jarno was especially distinguished, gave a passionate preference to the monstrous productions of the English stage.

If in this way the art of our players was not adequately noticed and admired, their persons on the other hand grew not entirely indifferent to all the gentlemen and all the ladies of the audience. We observed above, that, from the very first, our actresses had drawn upon them the attention of the young officers: in the sequel they were luckier, and made more important conquests. But, omitting these, we shall merely observe, that Wilhelm every day appeared more interesting to the countess; while in him, too, a silent inclination toward her was beginning to take root. Whenever he was on the stage, she could not turn her eyes from him; and, erelong, he seemed to play and to recite with his face toward her alone. To look upon each other, was to them the sweetest satisfaction; to which their harmless souls yielded without reserve, without cherishing a bolder wish, or thinking about any consequence.

As two hostile outposts will sometimes peacefully and pleasantly converse together across the river which divides them, not thinking of the war in which both their countries are engaged: so did the countess exchange looks full of meaning with our friend, across the vast chasm of birth and rank; both believing for themselves that they might safely cherish their several emotions.

The baroness, in the meantime, had selected Laertes,

who, being a spirited and lively young man, pleased her very much; and who, woman-hater as he was, felt unwilling to refuse a passing adventure. He would actually on this occasion have been fettered, against his will, by the courteous and attractive nature of the baroness, had not the baron done him accidentally a piece of good, or, if you will, of bad, service, by instructing him a little in the habits and temper of this lady.

Laertes, happening once to celebrate her praises, and give her the preference to every other of her sex, the baron, with a grin, replied, "I see how matters stand: our fair friend has got a fresh inmate for her stalls." This luckless comparison, which pointed too clearly to the dangerous caresses of the Circe, grieved poor Laertes to the heart: he could not listen to the baron without spite and anger, as the latter continued without mercy:

"Every stranger thinks he is the first whom this delightful manner of proceeding has concerned, but he is grievously mistaken; for we have all, at one time or another, been trotted round this course. Man, youth, or boy, be who he like, each must devote himself to her service for a season, must hang about her, and toil and long to gain her favour."

To the happy man just entering the garden of an enchantress, and welcomed by all the pleasures of an artificial spring, nothing can form a more unpleasant surprise, than if, while his ear is watching and drinking in the music of the nightingales, some transformed predecessor on a sudden grunts at his feet.

After this discovery, Laertes felt heartily ashamed that vanity should have again misled him to think well, even in the smallest degree, of any woman whatsoever. He now entirely forsook the baroness; kept by the *Stallmeister*, with whom he diligently fenced and hunted; conducting himself at rehearsals and representations as if these were but secondary matters.

The count and his lady would often in the mornings send for some of the company to attend them, and all had continual cause to envy the undeserved good fortune of Philina. The count kept his favourite, the Pedant, frequently for hours together, at his toilet. This genius had been dressed out by degrees; he was now equipped and furnished, even to watch and snuff-box.

Many times, too, particularly after dinner, the whole company were called out before the noble guests, — an honour which the artists regarded as the most flattering in the world; not observing, that on these very occasions the servants and huntsmen were ordered to bring in a multitude of hounds, and to lead strings of horses about the court of the castle.

Wilhelm had been counselled to praise Racine, the prince's favourite, and thereby to attract some portion of his Highness's favour to himself. On one of these afternoons, being summoned with the rest, he found an opportunity to introduce this topic. The prince asked him if he diligently read the great French dramatic writers, to which Wilhelm answered with a very eager "Yes." He did not observe that his Highness, without waiting for the answer, was already on the point of turning round to some one else: he fixed upon him, on the contrary, almost stepping in his way, and proceeded to declare that he valued the French theatre very highly, and read the works of their great masters with delight; particularly he had learned with true joy that his Highness did complete justice to the great talents of Racine. "I can easily conceive," continued he, "how people of high breeding and exalted rank must value a poet who has painted so excellently and so truly the circumstances of their lofty station. Corneille, if I may say so, has delineated great men; Racine, men of eminent rank. In reading his plays, I can always figure to myself the poet as living at a splendid court, with a great king before his eyes, in constant inter-

course with the most distinguished persons, and penetrating into the secrets of human nature, as it works concealed behind the gorgeous tapestry of palaces. When I study his 'Britannicus,' his 'Bérénice,' it seems as if I were transported in person to the court, were initiated into the great and the little, in the habitations of these earthly gods: through the fine and delicate organs of my author, I see kings whom a nation adores, courtiers whom thousands envy, in their natural forms, with their failings and their pains. The anecdote of Racine's dying of a broken heart, because Louis Fourteenth would no longer attend to him, and had shown him his dissatisfaction, is to me the key to all his works. It was impossible that a poet of his talents, whose life and death depended on the looks of a king, should not write such works as a king and a prince might applaud."

Jarno had stepped near, and was listening with astonishment. The prince, who had made no answer, and had only shown his approbation by an assenting look, now turned aside; though Wilhelm, who did not know that it was contrary to etiquette to continue a discussion under such circumstances, and exhaust a subject, would gladly have spoken more, and convinced the prince that he had not read his favourite poet without sensibility and profit.

"Have you never," said Jarno, taking him aside, "read one of Shakespeare's plays?"

"No," replied Wilhelm: "since the time when they became more known in Germany, I have myself grown unacquainted with the theatre; and I know not whether I should now rejoice that an old taste, and occupation of my youth, has been by chance renewed. In the meantime, all I have heard of these plays has excited no wish to become acquainted with such extraordinary monsters, which appear to set probability and dignity alike at defiance."

"I would advise you," said the other, "to make a trial, notwithstanding: it can do one no harm to look at what is extraordinary with one's own eyes. I will lend you a volume or two; and you cannot better spend your time, than by casting everything aside, and retiring to the solitude of your old habitation, to look into the magic-lantern of that unknown world. It is sinful of you to waste your hours in dressing out these apes to look more human, and teaching dogs to dance. One thing only I require, — you must not cavil at the form: the rest I can leave to your own good sense and feeling."

The horses were standing at the door; and Jarno mounted with some other cavaliers, to go and hunt. Wilhelm looked after him with sadness. He would fain have spoken much with this man, who, though in a harsh, unfriendly way, gave him new ideas, — ideas he had need of.

Oftentimes a man, when approaching some development of his powers, capacities, and conceptions, gets into a perplexity, from which a prudent friend might easily deliver him. He resembles a traveller who, at but a short distance from the inn he is to rest at, falls into the water: were any one to catch him then, and pull him to the bank, with one good wetting it were over; whereas, though he struggles out himself, it is often at the side where he tumbled in; and he has to make a wide and dreary circuit before reaching his appointed object.

Wilhelm now began to have an inkling that things went forward in the world differently from what he had supposed. He now viewed close at hand the solemn and imposing life of the great and distinguished, and wondered at the easy dignity which they contrived to give it. An army on its march, a princely hero at the head of it, such a multitude of coöperating warriors, such a multitude of crowding worshippers, exalted his

imagination. In this mood he received the promised books; and erelong, as may be easily supposed, the stream of that mighty genius laid hold of him, and led him down to a shoreless ocean, where he soon completely forgot and lost himself.

CHAPTER IX.

THE connection between the baron and the actors had suffered various changes since the arrival of the latter. At the commencement it had been productive of great satisfaction to both parties. As the baron for the first time in his life now saw one of those plays, with which he had already graced a private theatre, put into the hands of real actors, and in the fair way for a decent exhibition, he showed the benignest humour in the world. He was liberal in gifts: he bought little presents for the actresses from every millinery hawker, and contrived to send over many an odd bottle of champagne to the actors. In return for all this, our company took every sort of trouble with his play; and Wilhelm spared no diligence in learning, with extreme correctness, the sublime speeches of that very eminent hero, whose part had fallen to his share.

But, in spite of all these kind reciprocities, some clouds by degrees arose between the players and their patron. The baron's preferences for certain actors became daily more observable: this of necessity chagrined the rest. He exalted his favourites quite exclusively, and thus, of course, introduced disunion and jealousy among the company. Melina, without skill to help himself in dubious junctures, felt his situation very vexing. The persons eulogised accepted of their praise, without being singularly thankful for it; while the neglected gentlemen showed traces of their spleen by a thousand methods, and constantly found means to make it very disagreeable for their once much-honoured patron to appear among them. Their spite received no

little nourishment from a certain poem, by an unknown author, which made a great sensation in the castle. Previously to this the baron's intercourse with the company had given rise to many little strokes of merriment; several stories had been raised about him; certain little incidents, adorned with suitable additions, and presented in the proper light, had been talked of, and made the subject of much bantering and laughter. At last it began to be said that a certain rivalry of trade was arising between him and some of the actors, who also looked upon themselves as writers. The poem we spoke of was founded upon this report: it ran as follows:

"Lord Baron, I, poor devil, own
With envy, you your rank and state;
Your station, too, so near the throne;
Of heirs your possessions great;
Your father's seat, with walls and mounds,
His game-preserves, and hunting-grounds.

"While me, poor devil, it appears,
Lord Baron, you with envy view,
Since Nature, from my early years,
Has held me like a mother true,
With heart and head both light, I poor,
But no poor wight *grew*, to be sure.

"My dear Lord Baron, now to me
It seems, we well alone should let,
That you your father's son still be,
And I remain my mother's pet:
Let's free from envy live, and hate;
Nor let's desire each other's title:
No place you on Parnassus great,
No noble rank I in requital."

— *Editor's Version.*

Upon this poem, which various persons were possessed of, in copies scarcely legible, opinions were exceedingly divided. But who the author was, no one

could guess; and, as some began to draw a spiteful mirth from it, our friend expressed himself against it very keenly.

"We Germans," he exclaimed, "deserve to have our Muses still continue in the low contempt wherein they have languished so long; since we cannot value men of rank who take a share in our literature, no matter how! Birth, rank, and fortune are no wise incompatible with genius and taste; as foreign nations, reckoning among their best minds a great number of noblemen, can fully testify. Hitherto, indeed, it has been rare in Germany for men of high station to devote themselves to science; hitherto few famous names have become more famous by their love of art and learning; while many, on the other hand, have mounted out of darkness to distinction, and risen like unknown stars on the horizon. Yet such will not always be the case; and I greatly err, if the first classes of the nation are not even now in the way of also employing their advantages to earn the fairest laurels of the Muses, at no distant date. Nothing, therefore, grieves me more than to see the burgher jeering at the noble who can value literature; nay, even men of rank themselves, with inconsiderate caprice, maliciously scaring off their equal from a path where honour and contentment wait on all."

Apparently this latter observation pointed at the count, of whom Wilhelm had heard that he liked the poem very much. In truth, this nobleman, accustomed to rally the baron in his own peculiar way, was extremely glad of such an opportunity to plague his kinsman more effectually. As to who the writer of the squib might be, each formed his own hypothesis; and the count, never willing that another should surpass him in acuteness, fell upon a thought, which, in a short time, he would have sworn to the truth of. The verses could be written, he believed, by no one but his

Pedant, who was a very shrewd knave, and in whom for a long while, he had noticed some touches of poetic genius. By way of proper treat, he therefore caused the Pedant one morning to be sent for, and made him read the poem, in his own manner, in presence of the countess, the baroness, and Jarno, — a service he was paid for by applauses, praises, and a present; and, on the count's inquiring if he had not still some other poems of an earlier time, he cunningly contrived to evade the question. Thus did the Pedant get invested with the reputation of a poet and a wit, and, in the eyes of the baron's friends, of a pasquinader and a bad-hearted man. From that period, play as he might, the count applauded him with greater zeal than ever; so that the poor wight grew at last inflated till he nearly lost his senses, and began to meditate having a chamber in the castle, like Philina.

Had this project been fulfilled at once, a great mishap might have been spared him. As he was returning late one evening from the castle, groping about in the dark, narrow way, he was suddenly laid hold of, and kept on the spot by some persons, while some others rained a shower of blows upon him, and battered him so stoutly, that in a few seconds he was lying almost dead upon the place, and could not without difficulty crawl in to his companions. These, indignant as they seemed to be at such an outrage, felt their secret joy in the adventure: they could hardly keep from laughing, at seeing him so thoroughly curried, and his new brown coat bedusted through and through, and bedaubed with white, as if he had had to do with millers.

The count, who soon got notice of the business, broke into a boundless rage. He treated this act as the most heinous crime, called it an infringement of the *burgfried*, or peace of the castle, and caused his judge to make the strictest inquisition touching it.

The whited coat, it was imagined, would afford a leading proof. Every creature that possibly could have the smallest trade with flower or powder in the castle was submitted to investigation, but in vain.

The baron solemnly protested on his honour, that although this sort of jesting had considerably displeased him, and the conduct of his lordship the count had not been the friendliest, yet he had got over the affair; and with respect to the misfortune which had come upon the poet, or pasquinader, or whatsoever his title might be, he knew absolutely nothing, and had not the most remote concern in it.

The operations of the strangers, and the general commotion of the house, soon effaced all recollection of the matter; and so, without redress, the unlucky favourite had to pay dear for the satisfaction of pluming himself, a short while, in feathers not his own.

Our troop, regularly acting every night, and on the whole very decently treated, now began to make more clamorous demands, the better they were dealt with. Erelong their victuals, drink, attendance, lodging, grew inadequate; and they called upon the baron, their protector, to provide more liberally for them, and at last make good those promises of comfortable entertainment, which he had been giving them so long. Their complaints grew louder, and the efforts of our friend to still them more and more abortive.

Meanwhile, excepting in rehearsals and hours of acting, Wilhelm scarcely ever came abroad. Shut up in one of the remotest chambers, to which Mignon and the harper alone had free access, he lived and moved in the Shakespearian world, feeling or knowing nothing but the movements of his own mind.

We have heard of some enchanter summoning, by magic formulas, a vast multitude of spiritual shapes into his cell. The conjurations are so powerful that the whole space of the apartment is quickly full; and

the spirits, crowding on to the verge of the little circle which they must not pass, around this, and above the master's head, keep increasing in number, and ever whirling in perpetual transformation. Every corner is crammed, every crevice is possessed. Embryos expand themselves, and giant forms contract into the size of nuts. Unhappily the black-artist has forgot the counterword, with which he might command this flood of sprites again to ebb.

So sat Wilhelm in his privacy: with unknown movements, a thousand feelings and capacities awoke in him, of which he formerly had neither notion nor anticipation. Nothing could allure him from this state: he was vexed and restless if any one presumed to come to him, and talk of news or what was passing in the world.

Accordingly, he scarce took notice of the circumstance, when told that a judicial sentence was about being executed in the castle-yard, — the flogging of a boy, who had incurred suspicions of nocturnal housebreaking, and who, as he wore a peruke-maker's coat, had most probably been one of the assaulters of the Pedant. The boy indeed, it seemed, denied most obstinately; so that they could not inflict a formal punishment, but meant to give him a slight memorial as a vagabond, and send him about his business; he having prowled about the neighbourhood for several days, lain at night in the mills, and at last clapped a ladder to the garden wall, and mounted over by it.

Our friend saw nothing very strange in the transaction, and was dismissing it altogether, when Mignon came running in, and assured him that the criminal was Friedrich, who, since the rencounter with the *Stallmeister*, had vanished from the company, and not again been heard of.

Feeling an interest in the boy, Wilhelm hastily arose: he found, in the courtyard of the castle, the

preparations almost finished. The count loved solemnity on these occasions. The boy being now led out, our friend stepped forward, and entreated for delay, as he knew the boy, and had various things to say which might, perhaps, throw light on the affair. He had difficulty in succeeding, notwithstanding all his statements: at length, however, he did get permission to speak with the culprit in private. Friedrich averred, that, concerning the assault in which the Pedant had been used so harshly, he knew nothing whatever. He had merely been lurking about, and had come in at night to see Philina, whose room he had discovered, and would certainly have reached, had he not been taken by the way.

For the credit of the company, Wilhelm felt desirous not to have the truth of his adventure published. He hastened to the *Stallmeister:* he begged him to show favour, and, with his intimate knowledge of men and things about the castle, to find some means of quashing the affair, and dismissing the boy.

This whimsical gentleman, by Wilhelm's help, invented a little story, — how the boy had belonged to the troop, had run away from it, but soon wished to get back, and be received again into his place; how he had accordingly been trying in the night to come at certain of his well-wishers, and solicit their assistance. It was testified by others that his former behaviour had been good: the ladies put their hands to the work, and Friedrich was let go.

Wilhelm took him in, — a third person in that strange family, which for some time he had looked on as his own. The old man and little Mignon received the returning wanderer kindly; and all the three combined to serve their friend and guardian with attention, and procure him all the pleasure in their power.

CHAPTER X.

PHILINA now succeeded in insinuating further every day into the favour of the ladies. Whenever they were by themselves, she was wont to lead the conversation on the men whom they saw about the castle; and our friend was not the last or least important that engaged them. The cunning girl was well aware that he had made a deep impression on the countess: she therefore talked about him often, telling much that she knew or did not know, only taking care to speak of nothing that might be interpreted against him; eulogising, on the contrary, his nobleness of mind, his generosity, and, more than all, his modest and respectful conduct to the fair sex. To all inquiries made about him she replied with equal prudence; and the baroness, when she observed the growing inclination of her amiable friend, was likewise very glad at the discovery. Her own intrigues with several men, especially of late with Jarno, had not remained hidden from the countess, whose pure soul could not look upon such levities without disapprobation, and meek, though earnest, censures.

In this way both Philina and the baroness were personally interested in establishing a closer intercourse between the countess and our friend. Philina hoped, moreover, that there would occur some opportunity when she might once more labour for herself, and, if possible, get back the favour of the young man she had lost.

One day his lordship, with his guests, had ridden out to hunt; and their return was not expected till the

morrow. On this the baroness devised a frolic, which was altogether in her way, for she loved disguises, and, in order to surprise her friends, would suddenly appear among them as a peasant girl at one time, at another as a page, at another as a hunter's boy. By which means she almost gave herself the air of a little fairy, that is present everywhere, and exactly in the place where it is least expected. Nothing could exceed this lady's joy, if, without being recognised, she could contrive to wait upon the company for some time as a servant, or mix among them anyhow, and then at last in some sportful way disclose herself.

Toward night she sent for Wilhelm to her chamber, and, happening to have something else to do just then, left Philina to receive and prepare him.

He arrived, and found to his surprise, not the honourable lady, but the giddy girl, in the room. She received him with a certain dignified openness of manner, which she had of late been practising, and so constrained him likewise to be courteous.

At first she rallied him in general on the good fortune which pursued him everywhere, and which, as she could not but see, had led him hither in the present case. Then she delicately set before him the treatment with which of late he had afflicted her; she blamed and upbraided herself; confessed that she had but too well deserved such punishment; described with the greatest candour what she called her *former* situation; adding, that she would despise herself, if she were not capable of altering, and making herself worthy of his friendship.

Wilhelm was struck with this oration. He had too little knowledge of the world to understand that persons quite unstable, and incapable of all improvement, frequently accuse themselves in the bitterest manner, confessing and deploring their faults with extreme ingenuousness, though they possess not the smallest

power within them to retire from that course, along which the irresistible tendency of their nature is dragging them forward. Accordingly, he could not find in his heart to behave inexorably to the graceful sinner: he entered into conversation, and learned from her the project of a singular disguisement, wherewith it was intended to surprise the countess.

He found some room for hesitation here, nor did he hide his scruples from Philina: but the baroness, entering at this moment, left him not an instant for reflection; she hurried him away with her, declaring it was just the proper hour.

It was now grown dark. She took him to the count's wardrobe, made him change his own coat with his lordship's silk nightgown, and put the cap with red trimmings on his head. She then led him forward to the cabinet; and bidding him sit down upon the large chair, and take a book, she lit the Argand lamp which stood before him, and showed him what he was to do, and what kind of part he had to play.

They would inform the countess, she said, of her husband's unexpected arrival, and that he was in very bad humour. The countess would come in, walk up and down the room once or twice, then place herself beside the back of his chair, lay her arm upon his shoulder, and speak a few words. He was to play the cross husband as long and as well as possible; and, when obliged to disclose himself, he must behave politely, handsomely, and gallantly.

Wilhelm was left sitting, restlessly enough, in this singular mask. The proposal had come upon him by surprise: the execution of it got the start of the deliberation. The baroness had vanished from the room, before he saw how dangerous the post was which he had engaged to fill. He could not deny that the beauty, the youth, the gracefulness, of the countess had made some impression on him: but his

nature was entirely averse to all empty gallantry, and his principles forbade any thought of more serious enterprises; so that his perplexity at this moment was in truth extreme. The fear of displeasing the countess, and that of pleasing her too well, were equally busy in his mind.

Every female charm that had ever acted on him, now showed itself again to his imagination. Mariana rose before him in her white morning-gown, and entreated his remembrance. Philina's loveliness, her beautiful hair, her insinuating blandishments, had again become attractive by her late presence. Yet all this retired as if behind the veil of distance, when he figured to himself the noble, blooming countess, whose arm in a few minutes he would feel upon his neck, whose innocent caresses he was there to answer.

The strange mode in which he was to be delivered out of this perplexity he certainly did not anticipate. We may judge of his astonishment, nay, his terror, when the door opened behind him; and, at the first stolen look in the mirror, he quite clearly discerned the count coming in with a light in his hand. His doubt what he should do, whether he should sit still or rise, should flee, confess, deny, or beg forgiveness, lasted but a few instants. The count, who had remained motionless standing in the door, retired, and shut it softly. At the same moment, the baroness sprang forward by the side door, extinguished the lamp, tore Wilhelm from his chair, and hurried him with her into the closet. Instantly he threw off the nightgown, and put it in its former place. The baroness took his coat under her arm, and hastened with him through several rooms, passages, and partitions into her chamber, where Wilhelm, so soon as she recovered breath, was informed, that on her going to the countess, and delivering the fictitious intelligence about her husband's arrival, the countess had

answered, "I know it already: what can have happened? I saw him riding in, at the postern, even now." On which the baroness, in an excessive panic, had run to the count's chamber to give warning.

"Unhappily you came too late!" said Wilhelm. "The count was in the room before you, and saw me sitting."

"And recognised you?"

"That I know not. He was looking at me in the glass, as I at him; and, before I could well determine whether it was he or a spirit, he drew back, and closed the door behind him."

The anxiety of the baroness increased, when a servant came to call her, signifying that the count was with his lady. She went with no light heart, and found the count silent and thoughtful, indeed, but milder and kinder in his words than usual. She knew not what to think of it. They spoke about the incidents of the chase, and the causes of his quick return. The conversation soon ran out. The count became taciturn; and it struck the baroness particularly, when he asked for Wilhelm, and expressed a wish that he were sent for, to come and read something.

Wilhelm, who had now dressed himself in the baroness's chamber, and in some degree recovered his composure, obeyed the order, not without anxiety. The count gave him a book, out of which he read an adventurous tale, very little at his ease. His voice had a certain inconstancy and quivering in it, which fortunately corresponded with the import of the story. The count more than once gave kindly tokens of approval, and at last dismissed our friend, with praises of his exquisite manner of reading.

CHAPTER XI.

WILHELM had scarcely read one or two of Shakespeare's plays, till their effect on him became so strong that he could go no farther. His whole soul was in commotion. He sought an opportunity to speak with Jarno; to whom, on meeting with him, he expressed his boundless gratitude for such delicious entertainment.

"I clearly enough foresaw," said Jarno, "that you would not remain insensible to the charms of the most extraordinary and most admirable of all writers."

"Yes!" exclaimed our friend: "I cannot recollect that any book, any man, any incident of my life, has produced such important effects on me, as the precious works to which by your kindness I have been directed. They seem as if they were performances of some celestial genius, descending among men, to make them, by the mildest instructions, acquainted with themselves. They are no fictions! You would think, while reading them, you stood before the unclosed awful Books of Fate, while the whirlwind of most impassioned life was howling through the leaves, and tossing them fiercely to and fro. The strength and tenderness, the power and peacefulness, of this man, have so astonished and transported me, that I long vehemently for the time when I shall have it in my power to read farther."

"Bravo!" said Jarno, holding out his hand, and squeezing our friend's. "This is as it should be! And the consequences, which I hope for, will likewise surely follow."

"I wish," said Wilhelm, "I could but disclose to you all that is going on within me even now. All the anticipations I have ever had regarding man and his destiny, which have accompanied me from youth upwards, often unobserved by myself, I find developed and fulfilled in Shakespeare's writings. It seems as if he cleared up every one of our enigmas to us, though we cannot say, Here or there is the word of solution. His men appear like natural men, and yet they are not. These, the most mysterious and complex productions of creation, here act before us as if they were watches, whose dial-plates and cases were of crystal, which pointed out, according to their use, the course of the hours and minutes; while, at the same time, you could discern the combination of wheels and springs that turned them. The few glances I have cast over Shakespeare's world incite me, more than anything beside, to quicken my footsteps forward into the actual world, to mingle in the flood of destinies that is suspended over it, and at length, if I shall prosper, to draw a few cups from the great ocean of true nature, and to distribute them from off the stage among the thirsting people of my native land."

"I feel delighted with the temper of mind in which I now behold you," answered Jarno, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the excited youth: "renounce not the purpose of embarking in active life. Make haste to employ with alacrity the years that are granted you. If I can serve you, I will with all my heart. As yet I have not asked you how you came into this troop, for which you certainly were neither born nor bred. So much I hope and see, — you long to be out of it. I know nothing of your parentage, of your domestic circumstances: consider what you shall confide to me. Thus much only I can say: the times of war we live in may produce quick turns of fortune; did you incline devoting your strength and talents

to our service, not fearing labour, and, if need were, danger, I might even now have an opportunity to put you in a situation, which you would not afterward be sorry to have filled for a time." Wilhelm could not sufficiently express his gratitude: he was ready to impart to his friend and patron the whole history of his life.

In the course of this conversation, they had wandered far into the park, and at last came upon the highway that crossed it. Jarno stood silent for a moment, and then said, "Deliberate on my proposal, determine, give me your answer in a few days, and then let me have the narrative you mean to trust me with. I assure you, it has all along to me seemed quite incomprehensible how you ever could have anything to do with such a class of people. I have often thought with spleen and disgust, how, in order to gain a paltry living, you must fix your heart on a wandering ballad-monger, and a silly mongrel, neither male nor female."

He had not yet concluded, when an officer on horseback came hastily along; a groom following him with a led horse. Jarno shouted a warm salutation to him. The officer sprang from his horse; Jarno and he embraced and talked together; while Wilhelm, confounded at the last expressions of his warlike friend, stood thoughtfully at a side. Jarno turned over some papers which the stranger had delivered to him; while the latter came to Wilhelm, held out his hand, and said with emphasis, "I find you in worthy company: follow the counsel of your friend, and, by doing so, accomplish likewise the desire of an unknown man, who takes a genuine interest in you." So saying, he embraced Wilhelm, and pressed him cordially to his breast. At the same instant Jarno advanced, and said to the stranger, "It is best that I ride on with you: by this means you may get the necessary orders,

and set out again before night." Both then leaped into their saddles, and left our astonished friend to his own reflections.

Jarno's last words were still ringing in his ears. It galled him to see the two human beings that had most innocently won his affections so grievously disparaged by a man whom he honoured so much. The strange embracing of the officer, whom he knew not, made but a slight impression on him; it occupied his curiosity and his imagination for a moment: but Jarno's speech had cut him to the heart; he was deeply hurt by it: and now, in his way homewards, he broke out into reproaches against himself, that he should for a single instant have mistaken or forgotten the unfeeling coldness of Jarno, which looked out from his very eyes, and spoke in all his gestures. "No!" exclaimed he, "thou conceivest, dead-hearted worldling, that thou canst be a friend! All that thou hast power to offer me is not worth the sentiment which binds me to these forlorn beings. How fortunate that I have discovered in time what I had to expect from thee!"

Mignon came to meet him as he entered: he clasped her in his arms, exclaiming, "Nothing, nothing, shall part us, thou good little creature! The seeming prudence of the world shall never cause me to forsake thee, or forget what I owe thee!"

The child, whose warm caresses he had been accustomed to avoid, rejoiced with all her heart at this unlooked-for show of tenderness, and clung so fast to him that he had some difficulty to get loose from her.

From this period he kept a stricter eye on Jarno's conduct: many parts of it he did not think quite praiseworthy; nay, several things came out which totally displeased him. He had strong suspicions, for example, that the verses on the baron, which the poor Pedant had so dearly paid for, were composed by Jarno. And as the latter, in Wilhelm's presence, had

made sport of the adventure, our friend thought here was certainly a symptom of a most corrupted heart; for what could be more depraved than to treat a guiltless person, whose griefs oneself had occasioned, with jeering and mockery, instead of trying to satisfy or to indemnify him? In this matter Wilhelm would himself willingly have brought about reparation; and erelong a very curious accident led him to obtain some traces of the persons concerned in that nocturnal outrage.

Hitherto his friends had contrived to keep him unacquainted with the fact, that some of the young officers were in the habit of passing whole nights in merriment and jollity, with certain actors and actresses, in the lower hall of the old castle. One morning, having risen early, according to his custom, he happened to visit this chamber, and found the gallant gentlemen just in the act of performing rather a singular operation. They had mixed a bowl of water with a quantity of chalk, and were plastering this gruel with a brush upon their waistcoats and pantaloons, without stripping; thus very expeditiously restoring the spotlessness of their apparel. On witnessing this piece of ingenuity, our friend was at once struck with the recollection of the poor Pedant's whited and bedusted coat: his suspicions gathered strength when he learned that some relations of the baron were among the party.

To throw some light on his doubts, he engaged the youths to breakfast with him. They were very lively, and told a multitude of pleasant stories. One of them especially, who for a time had been on the recruiting-service, was loud in praising the craft and activity of his captain; who, it appeared, understood the art of alluring men of all kinds toward him, and overreaching every one by the deception proper for him. He circumstantially described how several young people

of good families and careful education had been cozened, by playing off to them a thousand promises of honour and preferment; and he heartily laughed at the simpletons, who felt so gratified, when first enlisted, at the thought of being esteemed and introduced to notice by so reputable, prudent, bold, and munificent an officer.

Wilhelm blessed his better genius for having drawn him back in time from the abyss to whose brink he had approached so near. Jarno he now looked upon as nothing better than a crimp: the embrace of the stranger officer was easily explained. He viewed the feelings and opinions of these men with contempt and disgust; from that moment he carefully avoided coming into contact with any one that wore a uniform; and, when he heard that the army was about to move its quarters, the news would have been extremely welcome to him, if he had not feared, that, immediately on its departure, he himself must be banished from the neighbourhood of his lovely friend, perhaps for ever.

CHAPTER XII.

MEANWHILE the baroness had spent several days disquieted by anxious fears and unsatisfied curiosity. Since the late adventure, the count's demeanour had been altogether an enigma to her. His manner was changed: none of his customary jokes were to be heard. His demands on the company and the servants had very much abated. Little pedantry or imperiousness was now to be discerned in him; he was silent and thoughtful, yet withal he seemed composed and placid; in short, he was quite another man. In choosing the books, which now and then he caused to be read to him, those of a serious, often a religious, cast, were pitched upon; and the baroness lived in perpetual fright lest, beneath this apparent serenity, a secret rancour might be lurking,— a silent purpose to revenge the offence he had so accidentally discovered. She determined, therefore, to make Jarno her confidant; and this the more freely, as that gentleman and she already stood in a relation to each other where it is not usual to be very cautious in keeping secrets. For some time Jarno had been her dearest friend, yet they had been dexterous enough to conceal their attachment and joys from the noisy world in which they moved. To the countess alone this new romance had not remained unknown; and very possibly the baroness might wish to get her fair friend occupied with some similar engagement, and thus to escape the silent reproaches she had often to endure from that noble-minded woman.

Scarcely had the baroness related the occurrence to her lover, when he cried out laughing, "To a certainty the old fool believes that he has seen his ghost! He dreads that the vision may betoken some misfortune, perhaps death, to him; and so he is become quite tame, as all half-men do, in thinking of that consummation which no one has escaped or will escape. Softly a little! As I hope he will live long enough, we may now train him at least, so that he shall not again give disturbance to his wife and household."

They accordingly, as soon as any opportunity occurred, began talking, in the presence of the count, about warnings, visions, apparitions, and the like. Jarno played the skeptic, the baroness likewise; and they carried it so far, that his lordship at last took Jarno aside, reproved him for his freethinking, and produced his own experience to prove the possibility, nay, actual occurrence, of such preternatural events. Jarno affected to be struck, to be in doubt, and finally to be convinced; but, in private with his friend, he made himself so much the merrier at the credulous weakling, who had thus been cured of his evil habits by a bugbear, but who, they admitted, still deserved some praise for expecting dire calamity, or death itself, with such composure.

"The natural result which the present apparition might have had, would possibly have ruffled him!" exclaimed the baroness, with her wonted vivacity; to which, when anxiety was taken from her heart, she had instantly returned. Jarno was richly rewarded; and the two contrived fresh projects for frightening the count still further, and still further exciting and confirming the affection of the countess for Wilhelm.

With this intention, the whole story was related to the countess. She, indeed, expressed her displeasure at such conduct; but from that time she became more thoughtful, and in peaceful moments seemed to be con-

sidering, pursuing, and painting out that scene which had been prepared for her.

The preparations now going forward on every side left no room for doubt that the armies were soon to move in advance, and the prince at the same time to change his headquarters. It was even said that the count intended leaving his castle, and returning to the city. Our players could therefore, without difficulty, calculate the aspect of their stars; yet none of them, except Melina, took any measures in consequence: the rest strove only to catch as much enjoyment as they could from the moment that was passing over them.

Wilhelm, in the meantime, was engaged with a peculiar task. The countess had required from him a copy of his writings, and he looked on this request as the noblest recompense for his labours.

A young author, who has not yet seen himself in print, will, in such a case, apply no ordinary care to provide a clear and beautiful transcript of his works. It is like the golden age of authorship: he feels transported into those centuries when the press had not inundated the world with so many useless writings, when none but excellent performances were copied, and kept by the noblest men; and he easily admits the illusion, that his own accurately ruled and measured manuscript may itself prove an excellent performance, worthy to be kept and valued by some future critic.

The prince being shortly to depart, a great entertainment had been appointed in honour of him. Many ladies of the neighbourhood were invited, and the countess had dressed betimes. On this occasion she had taken a costlier suit than usual. Her head-dress, and the decorations of her hair, were more exquisite and studied: she wore all her jewels. The baroness, too, had done her utmost to appear with becoming taste and splendour.

Philina, observing that both ladies, in expectation of their guests, felt the time rather tedious, proposed to send for Wilhelm, who was wishing to present his manuscript, now completed, and to read them some other little pieces. He came, and on his entrance was astonished at the form and the graces of the countess, which her decorations had but made more visible and striking. Being ordered by the ladies, he began to read; but with so much absence of mind, and so badly, that, had not his audience been excessively indulgent, they would very soon have dismissed him.

Every time he looked at the countess, it seemed to him as if a spark of electric fire were glancing before his eyes. In the end he knew not where to find the breath he wanted for his reading. The countess had always pleased him, but now it appeared as if he never had beheld a being so perfect and so lovely. A thousand thoughts flitted up and down his soul: what follows might be nearly their substance.

"How foolish is it in so many poets, and men of sentiment as they are called, to make war on pomp and decoration; requiring that women of all ranks should wear no dress but what is simple, and conformable to nature! They rail at decoration, without once considering, that, when we see a plain or positively ugly person clothed in a costly and gorgeous fashion, it is not the poor decoration that displeases us. I would assemble all the judges in the world, and ask them here if they wished to see one of these folds, of these ribbons and laces, these braids, ringlets, and glancing stones, removed? Would they not dread disturbing the delightful impression that so naturally and spontaneously meets us here? Yes, naturally I will say! As Minerva sprang in complete armour from the head of Jove; so does this goddess seem to have stepped forth with a light foot, in all her ornaments, from the bosom of some flower."

While reading, he turned his eyes upon her frequently, as if he wished to stamp this image on his soul for ever: he more than once read wrong, yet without falling into confusion of mind; though, at other times, he used to feel the mistaking of a word or a letter as a painful deformity, which spoiled a whole recitation.

A false alarm of the arrival of the guests put an end to the reading; the baroness went out; and the countess, while about to shut her writing-desk, which was standing open, took up her casket, and put some other rings upon her finger. "We are soon to part," said she, keeping her eyes upon the casket: "accept a memorial of a true friend, who wishes nothing more earnestly than that you may always prosper." She then took out a ring, which, underneath a crystal, bore a little plait of woven hair beautifully set with diamonds. She held it out to Wilhelm, who, on taking it, knew neither what to say nor do, but stood as if rooted to the ground. The countess shut her desk, and sat down upon the sofa.

"And I must go empty?" said Philina, kneeling down at the countess's right hand. "Do but look at the man: he carries such a store of words in his mouth, when no one wants to hear them; and now he cannot stammer out the poorest syllable of thanks. Quick, sir! Express your services by way of pantomime at least; and if to-day you can invent nothing, then, for Heaven's sake, be my imitator."

Philina seized the right hand of the countess, and kissed it warmly Wilhelm sank upon his knee, laid hold of the left, and pressed it to his lips. The countess seemed embarrassed, yet without displeasure.

"Ah!" cried Philina, "so much splendour of attire, I may have seen before, but never one so fit to wear it. What bracelets, but also what a hand! What a neck-dress, but also what a bosom."

"Peace, little cozener!" said the countess.

"Is this his lordship, then?" said Philina, pointing to a rich medallion, which the countess wore on her left side, by a particular chain.

"He is painted in his bridegroom-dress," replied the countess.

"Was he, then, so young?" inquired Philina: "I know it is but a year or two since you were married."

"His youth must be placed to the artist's account," replied the lady.

"He is a handsome man," observed Philina. "But was there never," she continued, placing her hand on the countess's heart, "never any other image that found its way in secret hither?"

"Thou art very bold, Philina," cried she: "I have spoiled thee. Let me never hear the like again."

"If you are angry, then am I unhappy," said Philina, springing up, and hastening from the room.

Wilhelm still held that lovely hand in both of his. His eyes were fixed on the bracelet-clasp: he noticed, with extreme surprise, that his initials were traced on it, in lines of brilliants.

"Have I, then," he modestly inquired, "your own hair in this precious ring?"

"Yes," replied she in a faint voice: then, suddenly collecting herself, she said, and pressed his hand, "Arise, and fare you well!"

"Here is my name," cried he, "by the most curious chance!" He pointed to the bracelet-clasp.

"How?" cried the countess: "it is the cipher of a female friend!"

"They are the initials of my name. Forget me not. Your image is engraven on my heart, and will never be effaced. Farewell! I must be gone."

He kissed her hand, and meant to rise; but, as in dreams, some strange thing fades and changes into something stranger, and the succeeding wonder takes

us by surprise; so, without knowing how it happened, he found the countess in his arms: her lips were resting upon his, and their warm mutual kisses were yielding them that blessedness which mortals sip from the topmost sparkling foam on the freshly poured cup of love.

Her head lay on his shoulder: the disordered ringlets and ruffles were forgotten. She had thrown her arm round him: he clasped her with vivacity, and pressed her again and again to his breast. Oh that such a moment could but last for ever! And woe to envious Fate that shortened even this brief moment to our friends!

How terrified was Wilhelm, how astounded did he start from his happy dream, when the countess, with a shriek, on a sudden tore herself away, and hastily pressed her hand against her heart.

He stood confounded before her: she held the other hand upon her eyes, and, after a moment's pause, exclaimed, "Away! leave me! delay not!"

He continued standing.

"Leave me!" she cried; and, taking off her hand from her eyes, she looked at him with an indescribable expression of countenance, and added, in the most tender and affecting voice, "Flee, if you love me."

Wilhelm was out of the chamber, and again in his room, before he knew what he was doing.

Unhappy creatures! What singular warning of chance or of destiny tore them asunder?

Book IV.

CHAPTER I.

LAERTES was standing at the window in a thoughtful mood, resting on his arm, and looking out into the fields. Philina came gliding toward him, across the large hall: she leaned upon him, and began to mock him for his serious looks.

"Do not laugh," replied he: "it is frightful to think how time goes on, how all things change and have an end. See here! A little while ago there was a stately camp: how pleasantly the tents looked! what restless life and motion was within them! how carefully they watched the whole enclosure! And, behold, it is all vanished in a day! For a short while, that trampled straw, those holes which the cooks have dug, will show a trace of what was here; and soon the whole will be ploughed and reaped as formerly, and the presence of so many thousand gallant fellows in this quarter will but glimmer in the memories of one or two old men."

Philina began to sing, and dragged forth her friend to dance with her in the hall. "Since Time is not a person we can overtake when he is past," cried she, "let us honour him with mirth and cheerfulness of heart while he is passing."

They had scarcely made a step or two, when Frau Melina came walking through the hall. Philina was wicked enough to invite her to join them in the dance, and thus to bring her in mind of the shape to which her pregnancy had reduced her.

"That I might never more see a woman *in an interesting situation!*" said Philina, when her back was turned.

"Yet she feels an *interest* in it," said Laertes.

"But she manages so shockingly. Didst thou notice that wabbling fold of her shortened petticoat, which always travels out before her when she moves? She has not the smallest knack or skill to trim herself a little, and conceal her state."

"Let her be," said Laertes. "Time will soon come to her aid."

"It were prettier, however," cried Philina, "if we could shake children from the trees."

The baron entered, and spoke some kind words to them, adding a few presents, in the name of the count and the countess, who had left the place very early in the morning. He then went to Wilhelm, who was busy in the side-chamber with Mignon. She had been extremely affectionate and taking; had asked minutely about Wilhelm's parents, brothers, sisters, and relations; and so brought to his mind the duty he owed his people, to send them some tidings of himself.

With the farewell compliments of the family, the baron delivered him an assurance from the count, that his lordship had been exceedingly obliged by his acting, his poetical labours, and theatrical exertions. For proof of this statement, the baron then drew forth a purse, through whose beautiful texture the bright glance of new gold coin was sparkling out. Wilhelm drew back, refusing to accept of it.

"Look upon this gift," said the baron, "as a compensation for your time, as an acknowledgment of your trouble, not as the reward of your talents. If genius procures us a good name and good-will from men, it is fair likewise, that, by our diligence and efforts, we should earn the means to satisfy our wants; since, after all, we are not wholly spirit. Had we been in town, where everything is to be got, we should have changed this little sum into a watch, a ring, or something of that sort; but, as it is, I must place the magic

rod in your own hands; procure a trinket with it, such as may please you best and be of greatest use, and keep it for our sakes. At the same time, you must not forget to hold the purse in honour. It was knit by the fingers of our ladies: they meant that the cover should give to its contents the most pleasing form."

"Forgive my embarrassment," said Wilhelm, "and my doubts about accepting this present. It, as it were, annihilates the little I have done, and hinders the free play of happy recollection. Money is a fine thing, when any matter is to be completely settled and abolished: I feel unwilling to be so entirely abolished from the recollection of your house."

"That is not the case," replied the baron; "but, feeling so tenderly yourself, you could not wish that the count should be obliged to consider himself wholly your debtor, especially when I assure you that his lordship's highest ambition has always consisted in being punctual and just. He is not uninformed of the labour you have undergone, or of the zeal with which you have devoted all your time to execute his views; nay, he is aware, that, to quicken certain operations, you have even expended money of your own. With what face shall I appear before him, then, if I cannot say that his acknowledgment has given you satisfaction?"

"If I thought only of myself," said Wilhelm, "if I might follow merely the dictates of my own feelings, I should certainly, in spite of all these reasons, steadfastly refuse this gift, generous and honourable as it is; but I will not deny, that, at the very moment when it brings me into one perplexity, it frees me from another, into which I have lately fallen with regard to my relations, and which has in secret caused me much uneasiness. My management, not only of the time, but also of the money, for which I have to give account, has not been the best; and now, by the kindness of

his lordship, I shall be enabled, with confidence, to give my people news of the good fortune to which this curious by-path has led me. I therefore sacrifice those feelings of delicacy, which, like a tender conscience, admonish us on such occasions, to a higher duty; and, that I may appear courageously before my father, I must consent to stand ashamed before you."

"It is singular," replied the baron, "to see what a world of hesitation people feel about accepting money from their friends and patrons, though ready to receive any other gift with joy and thankfulness. Human nature manifests some other such peculiarities, by which many scruples of a similar kind are produced and carefully cherished."

"Is it not the same with all points of honour?" said our friend.

"It is so," replied the baron, "and with several other prejudices. We must not root them out, lest in doing so we tear up noble plants along with them. Yet I am always glad when I meet with men that feel superior to such objections, when the case requires it; and I recall with pleasure the story of that ingenious poet who had written several plays for the court theatre, which met the monarch's warmest approbation. 'I must give him a distinguished recompense,' said the generous prince: 'ask him whether he would choose to have some jewel given him, or if he would disdain to accept a sum of money.' In his humourous way, the poet answered the inquiring courtier, 'I am thankful, with all my heart, for these gracious purposes; and, as the emperor is daily taking money from us, I see not wherefore I should feel ashamed of taking some from him.'"

Scarcely had the baron left the room, when Wilhelm eagerly began to count the cash, which had come to him so unexpectedly, and, as he thought, so undeservedly. It seemed as if the worth and dignity of gold, not

usually felt till later years, had now, by anticipation, twinkled in his eyes for the first time, as the fine, glancing coins rolled out from the beautiful purse. He reckoned up, and found, that, particularly as Melina had engaged immediately to pay the loan, he had now as much or more on the right side of his account as on that day when Philina first asked him for the nosegay. With a little secret satisfaction, he looked upon his talents; with a little pride, upon the fortune which had led and attended him. He now seized the pen, with an assured mind, to write a letter which might free his family from their anxieties, and set his late proceedings in the most favourable light. He abstained from any special narrative, and only by significant and mysterious hints left them room for guessing at what had befallen him. The good condition of his cash-book, the advantage he had earned by his talents, the favour of the great and of the fair, acquaintance with a wider circle, the improvement of his bodily and mental gifts, his hopes from the future, altogether formed such a fair cloud-picture, that Fata Morgana itself could scarcely have thrown together a stranger or a better.

In this happy exaltation, the letter being folded up, he went on to maintain a conversation with himself, recapitulating what he had been writing, and pointing out for himself an active and glorious future. The example of so many gallant warriors had fired him; the poetry of Shakespeare had opened a new world to him; from the lips of the beautiful countess he had inhaled an inexpressible inspiration. All this could not and would not be without effect.

The *Stallmeister* came to inquire whether they were ready with their packing. Alas! with the single exception of Melina, no one of them had thought of it. Now, however, they were speedily to be in motion. The count had engaged to have the whole party conveyed forward a few days' journey on their way: the horses

were now in readiness, and could not long be wanted. Wilhelm asked for his trunk: Frau Melina had taken it to put her own things in. He asked for money: Herr Melina had stowed it all far down at the bottom of his box. Philina said she had still some room in hers: she took Wilhelm's clothes, and bade Mignon bring the rest. Wilhelm, not without reluctance, was obliged to let it be so.

While they were loading, and getting all things ready, Melina said, "I am sorry we should travel like mountebanks and rope-dancers. I could wish that Mignon would put on girl's clothes, and that the harper would let his beard be shorn." Mignon clung firmly to Wilhelm, and cried, with great vivacity, "I am a boy — I will be no girl!" The old man held his peace; and Philina, on this suggestion, made some merry observations on the singularity of their protector, the count. "If the harper should cut off his beard," said she, "let him sew it carefully upon a ribbon, and keep it by him, that he may put it on again whenever his lordship the count falls in with him in any quarter of the world. It was this beard alone that procured him the favour of his lordship."

On being pressed to give an explanation of this singular speech, Philina said to them, "The count thinks it contributes very much to the completeness of theatrical illusion if the actor continues to play his part, and to sustain his character, even in common life. It was for this reason that he showed such favour to the Pedant: and he judged it, in like manner, very fitting that the harper not only wore his false beard at nights on the stage, but also constantly by day; and he used to be delighted at the natural appearance of the mask."

While the rest were laughing at this error, and the other strange opinions of the count, the harper led our friend aside, took leave of him, and begged, with tears,

that he would even now let him go. Wilhelm spoke to him, declaring that he would protect him against all the world; that no one should touch a hair of his head, much less send him off against his will.

The old man seemed affected deeply: an unwonted fire was glowing in his eyes. "It is not that," cried he, "which drives me away. I have long been reproaching myself in secret for staying with you. I ought to linger nowhere, for misfortune flies to overtake me, and injures all that are connected with me. Dread everything, unless you dismiss me; but ask me no questions. I belong not to myself. I cannot stay."

"To whom dost thou belong? Who can exert such a power on thee?"

"Leave me my horrid secret, and let me go! The vengeance which pursues me is not of the earthly judge. I belong to an inexorable destiny. I cannot stay, and I dare not."

"In the situation I see thee in, I shall certainly not let thee go."

"It were high treason against you, my benefactor, if I should delay. I am secure while with you, but you are in peril. You know not whom you keep beside you. I am guilty, but more wretched than guilty. My presence scares happiness away, and good deeds grow powerless when I become concerned in them. Fugitive, unresting I should be, that my evil genius might not seize me, which pursues but at a distance, and only appears when I have found a place, and am laying down my head to seek repose. More grateful I cannot show myself than by forsaking you."

"Strange man! Thou canst neither take away the confidence I place in thee, nor the hope I feel to see thee happy. I wish not to penetrate the secrets of thy superstition; but if thou livest in belief of wonderful forebodings, and entanglements of fate, then, to cheer and hearten thee, I say, unite thyself to my good for-

tune, and let us see which genius is the stronger, thy dark or my bright one."

Wilhelm seized this opportunity of suggesting to him many other comfortable things; for of late our friend had begun to imagine that this singular attendant of his must be a man, who, by chance or destiny, had been led into some weighty crime, the remembrance of which he was ever bearing on his conscience.

A few days ago Wilhelm, listening to his singing, had observed attentively the following lines:

"For him the light of ruddy morn
But paints the horizon red with flame;
And voices, from the depths of nature borne,
Woe! woe! upon his guilty head proclaim."

But, let the old man urge what arguments he pleased, our friend had constantly a stronger argument at hand. He turned everything on its fairest side; spoke so bravely, heartily, and cheerily, that even the old man seemed again to gather spirits, and to throw aside his whims.

CHAPTER II.

MELINA was in hopes to get established, with his company, in a small but thriving town at some distance. They had already reached the place where the count's horses were to turn, and now they looked about for other carriages and cattle to transport them onward. Melina had engaged to provide them a conveyance: he showed himself but niggardly, according to his custom. Wilhelm, on the contrary, had the shining ducats of the countess in his pocket, and thought he had the fullest right to spend them merrily; forgetting very soon how ostentatiously he had produced them in the stately balance transmitted to his father.

His friend Shakespeare, whom with the greatest joy he acknowledged as his godfather, and rejoiced the more that his name was Wilhelm, had introduced him to a prince, who frolicked for a time among mean, nay, vicious companions, and who, notwithstanding his nobleness of nature, found pleasure in the rudeness, indecency, and coarse intemperance of these altogether sensual knaves. This ideal likeness, which he figured as the type and the excuse of his own actual condition, was most welcome to our friend; and the process of self-deception, to which already he displayed an almost invincible tendency, was thereby very much facilitated.

He now began to think about his dress. It struck him that a waistcoat, over which, in case of need, one could throw a little short mantle, was a very fit thing for a traveller. Long knit pantaloons, and a pair of lacing-boots, seemed the true garb of a pedestrian. He

next procured a fine silk sash, which he tied about him, under the pretence at first of securing warmth for his person. On the other hand, he freed his neck from the tyranny of stocks, and got a few stripes of muslin sewed upon his shirt; making the pieces of considerable breadth, so that they presented the complete appearance of an ancient ruff. The beautiful silk neckerchief, the memorial of Mariana, which had once been saved from burning, now lay slackly tied beneath this muslin collar. A round hat, with a party-coloured band, and a large feather, perfected the mask.

The women all asserted that this garb became him very well. Philina in particular appeared enchanted with it. She solicited his hair for herself, — beautiful locks, which, the closer to approach the natural ideal, he had unmercifully clipped. By so doing she recommended herself not amiss to his favour; and our friend, who by his open-handedness had acquired the right of treating his companions somewhat in Prince Harry's manner, erelong fell into the humour of himself contriving a few wild tricks, and presiding in the execution of them. The people fenced, they danced, they devised all kinds of sports, and, in their gaiety of heart, partook of what tolerable wine they could fall in with in copious proportions; while, amid the disorder of this tumultuous life, Philina lay in wait for the coy hero, — over whom let his better genius keep watch!

One chief diversion, which yielded the company a frequent and very pleasing entertainment, consisted in producing an extempore play, in which their late benefactors and patrons were mimicked, and turned into ridicule. Some of our actors had seized very neatly whatever was peculiar in the outward manner of several distinguished people in the count's establishment; their imitation of these was received by the rest

of the party with the greatest approbation: and when Philina produced, from the secret archives of her experience, certain peculiar declarations of love that had been made to her, the audience were like to die with laughing and malicious joy.

Wilhelm censured their ingratitude; but they told him in reply that these gentry well deserved what they were getting, their general conduct toward such deserving people, as our friends believed themselves, not having been by any means the best imaginable. The little consideration, the neglect they had experienced, were now described with many aggravations. The jesting, bantering, and mimicry proceeded as before: our party were growing bitterer and more unjust every minute.

"I wish," observed Wilhelm, "there were no envy or selfishness lurking under what you say, but that you would regard those persons and their station in the proper point of view. It is a peculiar thing to be placed, by one's very birth, in an elevated situation in society. The man for whom inherited wealth has secured a perfect freedom of existence; who finds himself from his youth upwards abundantly encompassed with all the secondary essentials, so to speak, of human life, — will generally become accustomed to consider these qualifications as the first and greatest of all; while the worth of that mode of human life, which nature from her own stores equips and furnishes, will strike him much more faintly. The behaviour of noblemen to their inferiors, and likewise to each other, is regulated by external preferences. They give each credit for his title, his rank, his clothes, and equipage; but his individual merits come not into play."

This speech was honoured with the company's unbounded applause. They declared it to be shameful, that men of merit should constantly be pushed into the background; and that, in the great world, there

should not be a trace of natural and hearty intercourse. On this latter point particularly they overshot all bounds.

"Blame them not for it," said Wilhelm, "rather pity them! They have seldom an exalted feeling of that happiness which we admit to be the highest that can flow from the inward abundance of nature. Only to us poor creatures is it granted to enjoy the happiness of friendship in its richest fulness. Those dear to us we cannot elevate by our countenance, or advance by our favour, or make happy by our presents. We have nothing but ourselves. This whole self we must give away; and, if it is to be of any value, we must make our friend secure of it for ever. What an enjoyment, what a happiness, for giver and receiver! With what blessedness does truth of affection invest our situation! It gives to the transitory life of man a heavenly certainty: it forms the crown and capital of all that we possess."

While he spoke thus, Mignon had come near him: she threw her little arms round him, and stood with her cheek resting on his breast. He laid his hand on the child's head, and proceeded, "It is easy for a great man to win our minds to him, easy to make our hearts his own. A mild and pleasant manner, a manner only not inhuman, will of itself do wonders, — and how many means does he possess of holding fast the affections he has once conquered? To us, all this occurs less frequently; to us it is all more difficult; and we naturally, therefore, put a greater value on whatever, in the way of mutual kindness, we acquire and accomplish. What touching examples of faithful servants giving themselves up to danger and death for their masters? How finely has Shakespeare painted out such things to us! Fidelity, in this case, is the effort of a noble soul, struggling to become equal with one exalted above it. By steadfast

attachment and love, the servant is made equal to his lord, who, but for this, is justified in looking on him as a hired slave. Yes, these virtues belong to the lower class of men alone: that class cannot do without them, and with them it has a beauty of its own. Whoever is enabled to requite all favours easily will likewise easily be tempted to raise himself above the habit of acknowledgment. Nay, in this sense, I am of opinion it might almost be maintained, that a great man may possess friends, but cannot be one."

Mignon clung more and more closely to him.

"It may be so," replied one of the party: "we do not need their friendship, and do not ask it. But it were well if they understood a little more about the arts, which they affect to patronise. When we played in the best style, there was none to mind us: it was all sheer partiality. Any one they chose to favour, pleased; and they did not choose to favour those that merited to please. It was intolerable to observe how often silliness and mere stupidity attracted notice and applause."

"When I abate from this," said Wilhelm, "what seemed to spring from irony and malice, I think we may nearly say, that one fares in art as he does in love. And, after all, how shall a fashionable man of the world, with his dissipated habits, attain that intimate presence with a special object, which an artist must long continue in, if he would produce anything approaching to perfection, — a state of feeling without which it is impossible for any one to take such an interest, as the artist hopes and wishes, in his work?

"Believe me, my friends, it is with talents as with virtue; one must love them for their own sake, or entirely renounce them. And neither of them is acknowledged and rewarded, except when their possessor can practise them unseen, like a dangerous secret."

"Meanwhile, until some proper judge discovers us, we may all die of hunger," cried a fellow in the corner.

"Not quite inevitably," answered Wilhelm. "I have observed, that, so long as one stirs and lives, one always finds food and raiment, though they be not of the richest sort. And why should we repine? Were we not, altogether unexpectedly, and when our prospects were the very worst, taken kindly by the hand, and substantially entertained? And now, when we are in want of nothing, does it once occur to us to attempt anything for our improvement, or to strive, though never so faintly, toward advancement in our art? We are busied about indifferent matters; and, like schoolboys, we are casting all aside that might bring our lesson to our thoughts."

"In sad truth," said Philina, "it is even so! Let us choose a play: we will go through it on the spot. Each of us must do his best, as if he stood before the largest audience."

They did not long deliberate: a play was fixed on. It was one of those which at that time were meeting great applause in Germany, and have now passed away. Some of the party whistled a symphony; each speedily bethought him of his part; they commenced, and acted the entire play with the greatest attention, and really well beyond expectation. Mutual applauses circulated: our friends had seldom been so pleasantly diverted.

On finishing, they all felt exceedingly contented, partly on account of their time being spent so well, partly because each of them experienced some degree of satisfaction with his own performance. Wilhelm expressed himself copiously in their praise: the conversation grew cheerful and merry.

"You would see," cried our friend, "what advances we should make, if we continued this sort of training, and ceased to confine our attention to mere learning

by heart, rehearsing and playing mechanically, as if it were a barren duty, or some handicraft employment. How different a character do our musical professors merit! What interest they take in their art! how correct are they in the practicings they undertake in common! What pains they are at in tuning their instruments; how exactly they observe time; how delicately they express the strength and the weakness of their tones! No one there thinks of gaining credit to himself by a loud accompaniment of the solo of another. Each tries to play in the spirit of the composer, each to express well whatever is committed to him, be it much or little.

"Should not we, too, go as strictly and as ingeniously to work, seeing we practise an art far more delicate than that of music, — seeing we are called on to express the commonest and the strangest emotions of human nature, with elegance, and so as to delight? Can anything be more shocking than to slur over our rehearsal, and in our acting to depend on good luck, or the capricious choice of the moment? We ought to place our highest happiness and satisfaction in mutually desiring to gain each other's approbation: we should even value the applauses of the public only in so far as we have previously sanctioned them among ourselves. Why is the master of the band more secure about his music than the manager about his play? Because, in the orchestra, each individual would feel ashamed of his mistakes, which offend the outward ear; but how seldom have I found an actor disposed to acknowledge or feel ashamed of mistakes, pardonable or the contrary, by which the inward ear is so outrageously offended! I could wish, for my part, that our theatre were as narrow as the wire of a rope-dancer, that so no inept fellow might dare to venture on it, instead of being, as it is, a place where every one discovers in himself capacity enough to flourish and parade."

heart is allowed to display itself with touching expressiveness.

"I further conceived that I was penetrating quite into the spirit of the character, while I endeavoured, as it were, to take upon myself the load of deep melancholy under which my prototype was labouring, and in this humour to pursue him through the strange labyrinths of his caprices and his singularities. Thus learning, thus practising, I doubted not but I should by and by become one person with my hero.

"But, the farther I advanced, the more difficult did it become for me to form any image of the whole, in its general bearings; till at last it seemed as if impossible. I next went through the entire piece, without interruption; but here, too, I found much that I could not away with. At one time the characters, at another time the manner of displaying them, seemed inconsistent; and I almost despaired of finding any general tint, in which I might present my whole part with all its shadings and variations. In such devious paths I toiled, and wandered long in vain; till at length a hope arose that I might reach my aim in quite a new way.

"I set about investigating every trace of Hamlet's character, as it had shown itself before his father's death: I endeavoured to distinguish what in it was independent of this mournful event, independent of the terrible events that followed; and what most probably the young man would have been, had no such thing occurred.

"Soft, and from a noble stem, this royal flower had sprung up under the immediate influences of majesty; the idea of moral rectitude with that of princely elevation, the feeling of the good and dignified with the consciousness of high birth, had in him been unfolded simultaneously. He was a prince, by birth a prince; and he wished to reign, only that good men might be good without obstruction. Pleasing in form, polished

by nature, courteous from the heart, he was meant to be the pattern of youth and the joy of the world.

"Without any prominent passion, his love for Ophelia was a still presentiment of sweet wants. His zeal in knightly accomplishments was not entirely his own: it needed to be quickened and inflamed by praise bestowed on others for excelling in them. Pure in sentiment, he knew the honourable-minded, and could prize the rest which an upright spirit tastes on the bosom of a friend. To a certain degree, he had learned to discern and value the good and the beautiful in arts and sciences; the mean, the vulgar, was offensive to him; and, if hatred could take root in his tender soul, it was only so far as to make him properly despise the false and changeful insects of a court, and play with them in easy scorn. He was calm in his temper, artless in his conduct, neither pleased with idleness, nor too violently eager for employment. The routine of a university he seemed to continue when at court. He possessed more mirth of humour than of heart: he was a good companion, pliant, courteous, discreet, and able to forget and forgive an injury, yet never able to unite himself with those who overstepped the limits of the right, the good, and the becoming.

"When we read the piece again, you shall judge whether I am yet on the proper track. I hope at least to bring forward passages that shall support my opinion in its main points."

This delineation was received with warm approval; the company imagined they foresaw that Hamlet's manner of proceeding might now be very satisfactorily explained; they applauded this method of penetrating into the spirit of a writer. Each of them proposed to himself to take up some piece, and study it on these principles, and so unfold the author's meaning.

every man was eager to exhibit to our travellers the danger that awaited them as truly dangerous: every man was eager to suggest that some other route might be adopted.

By these means, most of our friends had been seized with anxiety and fear; and when, according to the new republican constitution, the whole members of the state had been called together to take counsel on this extraordinary case, they were almost unanimously of opinion that it would be proper either to keep back the mischief by abiding where they were, or to evade it by choosing another road.

Wilhelm alone, not participating in the panic, regarded it as mean to abandon, for the sake of mere rumours, a plan they had not entered on without much thought. He endeavoured to put heart into them: his reasons were manly and convincing.

"It is but a rumour," he observed; "and how many such arise in time of war! Well-informed people say that the occurrence is exceedingly improbable, nay, almost impossible. Shall we, in so important a matter, allow a vague report to determine our proceedings? The route pointed out to us by the count, and to which our passport was adapted, is the shortest and in the best condition. It leads us to the town, where you see acquaintances, friends, before you, and may hope for a good reception. The other way will also bring us thither; but by what a circuit, and along what miserable roads! Have we any right to hope, that, in this late season of the year, we shall get on at all? and what time and money shall we squander in the meanwhile!" He added many more considerations, presenting the matter on so many advantageous sides, that their fear began to dissipate, and their courage to increase. He talked to them so much about the discipline of regular troops, he painted the marauders and wandering rabble so contemptuously, and represented

the danger itself as so pleasant and inspiring, that the spirits of the party were altogether cheered.

Laertes from the first had been of his opinion: he now declared that he would not flinch or fail. Old Boisterous found a consenting phrase or two to utter, in his own vein; Philina laughed at them all; and Madam Melina, who, notwithstanding her advanced state of pregnancy, had lost nothing of her natural stout-heartedness, regarded the proposal as heroic. Herr Melina, moved by this harmonious feeling, hoping also to save somewhat by travelling the short road which had been first contemplated, did not withstand the general consent; and the project was agreed to with universal alacrity.

They next began to make some preparations for defence at all hazards. They bought large hangers, and slung them in well-quilted straps over their shoulders. Wilhelm further stuck a pair of pistols in his girdle. Laertes, independently of this occurrence, had a good gun. They all took the road in the highest glee.

On the second day of their journey, the drivers, who knew the country well, proposed to take their noon's rest in a certain woody spot of the hills; since the town was far off, and in good weather the hill-road was generally preferred.

The day being beautiful, all easily agreed to the proposal. Wilhelm, on foot, went on before them through the hills; making every one that met him stare with astonishment at his singular figure. He hastened with quick and contented steps across the forest; Laertes walked whistling after him; none but the women continued to be dragged along in the carriages. Mignon, too, ran forward by his side, proud of the hanger, which, when the party were all arming, she would not go without. Around her hat she had bound the pearl necklace, one of Mariana's relics, which Wilhelm still possessed. Friedrich, the fair-haired boy,

carried Laertes's gun. The harper had the most pacific look; his long cloak was tucked up within his girdle, to let him walk more freely; he leaned upon a knotty staff; his harp had been left behind him in the carriage.

Immediately on reaching the summit of the height, a task not without its difficulties, our party recognised the appointed spot, by the fine beech-trees which encircled and screened it. A spacious green, sloping softly in the middle of the forest, invited one to tarry; a trimly bordered well offered the most grateful refreshment; and on the farther side, through chasms in the mountains, and over the tops of the woods, appeared a landscape distant, lovely, full of hope. Hamlets and mills were lying in the bottoms, villages upon the plain: and a new chain of mountains, visible in the distance, made the prospect still more significant of hope; for they entered only like a soft limitation.

The first comers took possession of the place, rested awhile in the shade, lighted a fire, and so awaited, singing as they worked, the remainder of the party, who by degrees arrived, and with one accord saluted the place, the lovely weather, and still lovelier scene.

CHAPTER V.

If our friends had frequently enjoyed a good and merry hour together while within four walls, they were naturally much gayer here, where the freedom of the sky and the beauty of the place seemed, as it were, to purify the feelings of every one. All felt nearer to each other: all wished that they might pass their whole lives in so pleasant an abode. They envied hunters, charcoal-men, and wood-cutters, — people whom their calling constantly retains in such happy places, — but prized, above all, the delicious economy of a band of gypsies. They envied these wonderful companions, entitled to enjoy in blissful idleness all the adventurous charms of nature: they rejoiced at being in some degree like them.

Meanwhile the women had begun to boil potatoes, and to unwrap and get ready the victuals brought along with them. Some pots were standing by the fire. The party had placed themselves in groups, under the trees and bushes. Their singular apparel, their various weapons, gave them a foreign aspect. The horses were eating their provender at a side. Could one have concealed the coaches, the look of this little horde would have been romantic, even to complete illusion.

Wilhelm enjoyed a pleasure he had never felt before. He could now imagine his present company to be a wandering colony, and himself the leader of it. In this character he talked with those around him, and figured out the fantasy of the moment as poetically as he could. The feelings of the party rose in cheerful-

ness: they ate and drank and made merry, and repeatedly declared that they had never passed more pleasant moments.

Their contentment had not long gone on increasing, till activity awoke among the younger part of them. Wilhelm and Laertes seized their rapiers, and began to practise on this occasion with theatrical intentions. They undertook to represent the duel in which Hamlet and his adversary find so tragical an end. Both were persuaded, that, in this powerful scene, it was not enough merely to keep pushing awkwardly hither and thither, as it is generally exhibited in theatres: they were in hopes to show by example how, in presenting it, a worthy spectacle might also be afforded to the critic in the art of fencing. The rest made a circle round them. Both fought with skill and ardour. The interest of the spectators rose higher every pass.

But all at once, in the nearest bush, a shot went off, and immediately another; and the party flew asunder in terror. Next moment armed men were to be seen pressing forward to the spot where the horses were eating their fodder, not far from the coaches that were packed with luggage.

A universal scream proceeded from the women: our heroes threw away their rapiers, seized their pistols, and ran toward the robbers; demanding, with violent threats, the meaning of such conduct.

This question being answered laconically, with a couple of musket-shots, Wilhelm fired his pistol at a crisp-headed knave, who had got upon the top of the coach, and was cutting the cords of the package. Rightly hit, this artist instantly came tumbling down; nor had Laertes missed. Both, encouraged by success, drew their side-arms; when a number of the plundering party rushed out upon them, with curses and loud bellowing, fired a few shots at them, and fronted their impetuosity with glittering sabres. Our young heroes

made a bold resistance. They called upon their other comrades, and endeavoured to excite them to a general resistance. But, erelong, Wilhelm lost the sight of day, and the consciousness of what was passing. Stupefied by a shot that wounded him between the breast and the left arm, by a stroke that split his hat in two, and almost penetrated to his brain, he sank down, and only by the narratives of others came afterward to understand the luckless end of this adventure.

On again opening his eyes, he found himself in the strangest posture. The first thing that pierced the dimness, which yet swam before his vision, was Philina's face bent down over his. He felt weak, and, making a movement to rise, discovered that he was in Philina's lap; into which, indeed, he again sank down. She was sitting on the sward. She had softly pressed toward her the head of the fallen young man, and made for him an easy couch, as far as in her power. Mignon was kneeling with dishevelled and bloody hair at his feet, which she embraced with many tears.

On noticing his bloody clothes, Wilhelm asked, in a broken voice, where he was, and what had happened to him and the rest. Philina begged him to be quiet: the others, she said, were all in safety, and none but he and Laertes wounded. Further she would tell him nothing, but earnestly entreated him to keep still, as his wounds had been but slightly and hastily bound. He stretched out his hand to Mignon, and inquired about the bloody locks of the child, who he supposed was also wounded.

For the sake of quietness, Philina let him know that this true-hearted creature, seeing her friend wounded, and in the hurry of the instant being able to think of nothing which would staunch the blood, had taken her own hair, that was flowing round her head, and tried to stop the wounds with it, but had soon been obliged to give up the vain attempt; that afterward they had

bound him with moss and dry mushrooms, Philina giving up her neckerchief for that purpose.

Wilhelm noticed that Philina was sitting with her back against her own trunk, which still looked firmly locked and quite uninjured. He inquired if the rest also had been so lucky as to save their goods. She answered with a shrug of the shoulders, and a look over the green, where broken chests, and coffers beaten into fragments, and knapsacks ripped up, and a multitude of little wares, lay scattered all round. No person was to be seen in the place, this strange group thus being alone in the solitude.

Inquiring further, our friend learned more and more particulars. The rest of the men, it appeared, who, at all events, might still have made resistance, were struck with terror, and soon overpowered. Some fled, some looked with horror at the accident. The drivers, for the sake of their cattle, had held out more obstinately; but they, too, were at last thrown down and tied; after which, in a few minutes, everything was thoroughly ransacked, and the booty carried off. The hapless travellers, their fear of death being over, had begun to mourn their loss; had hastened with the greatest speed to the neighbouring village, taking with them Laertes, whose wounds were slight, and carrying off but a very few fragments of their property. The harper, having placed his damaged instrument against a tree, had proceeded in their company to the place, to seek a surgeon, and return with his utmost rapidity to help his benefactor, whom he had left apparently upon the brink of death.

CHAPTER VI.

MEANWHILE our three adventurers continued yet a space in their strange position, no one returning to their aid. Evening was advancing: the darkness threatened to come on. Philina's indifference was changing to anxiety; Mignon ran to and fro, her impatience increasing every moment; and at last, when their prayer was granted, and human creatures did approach, a new alarm fell upon them. They distinctly heard a troop of horses coming up the road they had lately travelled: they dreaded lest a second time some company of unbidden guests might be purposing to visit this scene of battle, and gather up the gleanings.

The more agreeable was their surprise, when, after a few moments, a lady issued from the thickets, riding on a gray courser, and accompanied by an elderly gentleman and some cavaliers, followed by grooms, servants, and a troop of hussars.

Philina started at this phenomenon, and was about to call, and entreat the fair Amazon for help, when the latter turned her astonished eyes on the group, instantly checked her horse, rode up to them, and halted. She inquired eagerly about the wounded man, whose posture in the lap of this light-minded Samaritan seemed to strike her as peculiarly strange.

"Is he your husband?" she inquired of Philina. "Only a friend," replied the other, with a tone Wilhelm liked not at all. He had fixed his eyes upon the soft, elevated, calm, sympathising features of the stranger: he thought he had never seen aught nobler or more lovely. Her shape he could not see: it was hid by a

man's white greatcoat, which she seemed to have borrowed from some of her attendants, to screen her from the chill evening air.

By this the horsemen also had come near. Some of them dismounted: the lady did so likewise. She asked, with humane sympathy, concerning every circumstance of the mishap which had befallen the travellers, but especially concerning the wounds of the poor youth who lay before her. Thereupon she turned quickly round, and went aside with the old gentleman to some carriages, which were slowly coming up the hill, and which at length stopped upon the scene of action.

The young lady having stood with her conductor a short time at the door of one of the coaches, and talked with the people in it, a man of a squat figure stepped out, and came along with them to our wounded hero. By the little box which he held in his hand, and the leathern pouch with instruments in it, you soon recognised him for a surgeon. His manners were rude rather than attractive; but his hand was light, and his help welcome.

Having examined strictly, he declared that none of the wounds were dangerous. He would dress them, he said, on the spot; after which the patient might be carried to the nearest village.

The young lady's anxiety seemed to augment. "Do but look," she said, after going to and fro once or twice, and again bringing the old gentleman to the place: "look how they have treated him! And is it not on our account that he is suffering?" Wilhelm heard these words, but did not understand them. She went restlessly up and down: it seemed as if she could not tear herself away from the presence of the wounded man; while at the same time she feared to violate decorum by remaining, when they had begun, though not without difficulty, to remove some part of his apparel. The surgeon was just cutting off the left sleeve

of his patient's coat, when the old gentleman came near, and represented to the lady, in a serious tone, the necessity of proceeding on their journey. Wilhelm kept his eyes bent on her, and was so enchanted with her looks, that he scarcely felt what he was suffering or doing.

Philina, in the meantime, had risen to kiss the lady's hand. While they stood beside each other, Wilhelm thought he had never seen such a contrast. Philina had never till now appeared in so unfavourable a light. She had no right, as it seemed to him, to come near that noble creature, still less to touch her.

The lady asked Philina various things, but in an undertone. At length she turned to the old gentleman, and said, "Dear uncle, may I be generous at your expense?" She took off the greatcoat, with the visible intention to give it to the stripped and wounded youth.

Wilhelm, whom the healing look of her eyes had hitherto held fixed, was now, as the surtout fell away, astonished at her lovely figure. She came near, and softly laid the coat above him. At this moment, as he tried to open his mouth and stammer out some words of gratitude, the lively impression of her presence worked so strongly on his senses, already caught and bewildered, that all at once it appeared to him as if her head were encircled with rays; and a glancing light seemed by degrees to spread itself over all her form. At this moment the surgeon, making preparations to extract the ball from his wound, gave him a sharper twinge; the angel faded away from the eyes of the fainting patient; he lost all consciousness; and, on returning to himself, the horsemen and coaches, the fair one with her attendants, had vanished like a dream.

CHAPTER VII.

WILHELM'S wounds once dressed, and his clothes put on, the surgeon hastened off, just as the harper with a number of peasants arrived. Out of some cut boughs, which they speedily wattled with twigs, a kind of litter was constructed, upon which they placed the wounded youth, and under the conduct of a mounted huntsman, whom the noble company had left behind them, carried him softly down the mountain. The harper, silent, and shrouded in his own thoughts, bore with him his broken instrument. Some men brought on Philina's box, herself following with a bundle. Mignon skipped along through copse and thicket, now before the party, now beside them, and looked up with longing eyes at her hurt protector.

He, meanwhile, wrapped in his warm surtout, was lying peacefully upon the litter. An electric warmth seemed to flow from the fine wool into his body: in short, he felt in the most delightful frame of mind. The lovely being, whom this garment lately covered, had affected him to the very heart. He still saw the coat falling down from her shoulders; saw that noble form, begirt with radiance, stand beside him; and his soul hied over rocks and forests on the footsteps of his vanished benefactress.

It was nightfall when the party reached the village, and halted at the door of the inn where the rest of the company, in the gloom of despondency, were bewailing their irreparable loss. The one little chamber of the house was crammed with people. Some of them were lying upon straw, some were occupying benches, some

had squeezed themselves behind the stove. Frau Melina, in a neighbouring room, was painfully expecting her delivery. Fright had accelerated this event. With the sole assistance of the landlady, a young, inexperienced woman, nothing good could be expected.

As the party just arrived required admission, there arose a universal murmur. All now maintained, that by Wilhelm's advice alone, and under his especial guidance, they had entered on this dangerous road, and exposed themselves to such misfortunes. They threw the blame of the disaster wholly on him: they stuck themselves in the door, to oppose his entrance; declaring that he must go elsewhere and seek quarters. Philina they received with still greater indignation, nor did Mignon and the harper escape their share.

The huntsman, to whom the care of the forsaken party had been earnestly and strictly recommended by his beautiful mistress, soon grew tired of this discussion: he rushed upon the company with oaths and menaces; commanding them to fall to the right and left, and make way for this new arrival. They now began to pacify themselves. He made a place for Wilhelm on a table, which he shoved into a corner; Philina had her box put there, and then sat down upon it. All packed themselves as they best could, and the huntsman went away to see if he could not find for "the young couple" a more convenient lodging.

Scarcely was he gone, when spite again grew noisy, and one reproach began to follow close upon another. Each described and magnified his loss, censuring the foolhardiness they had so keenly smarted for. They did not even hide the malicious satisfaction they felt at Wilhelm's wounds: they jeered Philina, and imputed to her as a crime the means by which she had saved her trunk. From a multitude of gibes and bitter innuendoes, you were required to conclude, that, during

the plundering and discomfiture, she had endeavoured to work herself into favour with the captain of the band, and had persuaded him, Heaven knew by what arts and complaisance, to give her back the chest unhurt. To all this she answered nothing, only clanked with the large padlocks of her box, to impress her censurers completely with its presence, and by her own good fortune to augment their desperation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THOUGH our friend was weak from loss of blood, and though, ever since the appearance of that helpful angel, his feelings had been soft and mild, yet at last he could not help getting vexed at the harsh and unjust speeches which, as he continued silent, the discontented company went on uttering against him. Feeling himself strong enough to sit up, and expostulate on the annoyance they were causing to their friend and leader, he raised his bandaged head, and propping himself with some difficulty, and leaning against the wall, he began to speak as follows:

"Considering the pain your losses occasion, I forgive you for assailing me with injuries at a moment when you should condole with me; for opposing and casting me from you the first time I have needed to look to you for help. The services I did you, the complaisance I showed you, I regarded as sufficiently repaid by your thanks, by your friendly conduct: do not warp my thoughts, do not force my heart to go back and calculate what I have done for you; the calculation would be painful to me. Chance brought me near you, circumstances and a secret inclination kept me with you. I participated in your labours and your pleasures: my slender abilities were ever at your service. If you now blame me with bitterness for the mishap that has befallen us, you do not recollect that the first project of taking this road came to us from stranger people, was weighed by all of you, and sanctioned by every one as well as by me.

"Had our journey ended happily, each would have

taken credit to himself for the happy thought of suggesting this plan, and preferring it to others; each would joyfully have put us in mind of our deliberations, and of the vote he gave: but now you make me alone responsible; you force a piece of blame upon me, which I would willingly submit to, if my conscience, with a clear voice, did not pronounce me innocent, nay, if I might not appeal with safety even to yourselves. If you have aught to say against me, bring it forward in order, and I shall defend myself; if you have nothing reasonable to allege, then be silent, and do not torment me now, when I have such pressing need of rest."

By way of answer, the girls once more began whimpering and whining, and describing their losses circumstantially. Melina was quite beside himself; for he had suffered more in purse than any of them, — more, indeed, than we can rightly estimate. He stamped like a madman up and down the little room, he knocked his head against the wall, he swore and scolded in the most unseemly manner; and the landlady entering at this very time with news that his wife had been delivered of a dead child, he yielded to the most furious ebullitions; while, in accordance with him, all howled and shrieked, and bellowed and uproared, with double vigour.

Wilhelm, touched to the heart at the same time with sympathy for their sorrows and with vexation at their mean way of thinking, felt all the vigour of his soul awakened, notwithstanding the weakness of his body. "Deplorable as your case may be," exclaimed he, "I shall almost be compelled to despise you! No misfortune gives us right to load an innocent man with reproaches. If I had share in this false step, am not I suffering my share? I lie wounded here; and, if the company has come to loss, I myself have come to most. The wardrobe of which we have been robbed, the

decorations that are gone, were mine; for you, Herr Melina, have not yet paid me; and I here fully acquit you of all obligation in that matter."

"It is well to give what none of us will ever see again," replied Melina. "Your money was lying in my wife's coffer, and it is your own blame that you have lost it. But, ah! if that were all!" And thereupon he began anew to stamp and scold and squeal. Every one recalled to memory the superb clothes from the count's wardrobe; the buckles, watches, snuff-boxes, hats, for which Melina had so happily transacted with the head valet. Each, then, thought also of his own, though far inferior, treasures. They looked with spleen at Philina's box, and gave Wilhelm to understand that he had indeed done wisely to connect himself with that fair personage, and to save his own goods also, under the shadow of her fortune.

"Do you think," he exclaimed at last, "that I shall keep anything apart while you are starving? And is this the first time I have honestly shared with you in a season of need? Open the trunk: all that is mine shall go to supply the common wants."

"It is *my* trunk," observed Philina, "and I will not open it till I please. Your rag or two of clothes, which I have saved for you, could amount to little, though they were sold to the most conscientious of Jews. Think of yourself, — what your cure will cost, what may befall you in a strange country."

"You, Philina," answered Wilhelm, "will keep back from me nothing that is mine; and that little will help us out of the first perplexity. But a man possesses many things besides coined money to assist his friends with. All that is in me shall be devoted to these hapless persons, who, doubtless, on returning to their senses, will repent their present conduct. Yes," continued he, "I feel that you have need of help; and, what is mine to do, I will perform. Give me your

confidence again; compose yourselves for a moment, and accept of what I promise. Who will receive the engagement of me in the name of all?"

Here he stretched out his hand, and cried, "I promise not to flinch from you, never to forsake you till each shall see his losses doubly and trebly repaired; till the situation you are fallen into, by whose blame soever, shall be totally forgotten by all of you, and changed with a better."

He kept his hand still stretched out, but no one would take hold of it. "I promise it again," cried he, sinking back upon his pillow. All continued silent: they felt ashamed, but nothing comforted: and Philina, sitting on her chest, kept cracking nuts, a stock of which she had discovered in her pocket.

CHAPTER IX.

THE huntsman now came back with several people, and made preparations for carrying away the wounded youth. He had persuaded the parson of the place to receive the "young couple" into his house; Philina's trunk was taken out; she followed with a natural air of dignity. Mignon ran before; and, when the patient reached the parsonage, a wide couch, which had long been standing ready as guest's bed and bed of honour, was assigned him. Here it was first discovered that his wound had opened, and bled profusely. A new bandage was required for it. He fell into a feverish state: Philina waited on him faithfully; and, when fatigue overpowered her, she was relieved by the harper. Mignon, with the firmest purpose to watch, had fallen asleep in a corner.

Next morning Wilhelm, who felt himself in some degree refreshed, learned, by inquiring of the huntsman, that the honourable persons who last night assisted him so nobly, had shortly before left their estates, in order to avoid the movements of the contending armies, and remain, till the time of peace, in some more quiet district. He named the elderly nobleman, as well as his niece, mentioned the place they were first going to, and told how the young lady had charged him to take care of Wilhelm.

The entrance of the surgeon interrupted the warm expressions of gratitude our friend was giving vent to. He made a circumstantial description of the wounds, and certified that they would soon heal, if the patient took care of them, and kept himself at peace.

When the huntsman was gone, Philina signified that he had left with her a purse of twenty *louis-d'or;* that he had given the parson a remuneration for their lodging, and left with him money to defray the surgeon's bill when the cure should be completed. She added, that she herself passed everywhere for Wilhelm's wife; that she now begged leave to introduce herself once for all to him in this capacity, and would not allow him to look out for any other sick-nurse.

"Philina," said Wilhelm, "in this disaster that has overtaken us, I am already deeply in your debt, for kindness shown me; and I should not wish to see my obligations increased. I am uneasy so long as you are about me, for I know of nothing by which I can repay your labour. Give me what things of mine you have saved in your trunk; join the rest of the company; seek another lodging; take my thanks, and the gold watch as a small acknowledgment: only leave me; your presence disturbs me more than you can fancy."

She laughed in his face when he had ended. "Thou art a fool," she said: "thou wilt not gather wisdom. I know better what is good for thee: I will stay, I will not budge from the spot. I have never counted on the gratitude of men, and therefore not on thine; and, if I have a touch of kindness for thee, what hast thou to do with it?"

She stayed accordingly, and soon wormed herself into favour with the parson and his household; being always cheerful, having the knack of giving little presents, and of talking to each in his own vein; at the same time always contriving to do exactly what she pleased. Wilhelm's state was not uncomfortable: the surgeon, an ignorant but not unskilful man, let nature have sway; and the patient was soon on the road to recovery. For such a consummation he vehemently longed, being eager to pursue his plans and wishes.

Incessantly he kept recalling that event, which had made an ineffaceable impression on his heart. He saw the beautiful Amazon again come riding out of the thickets: she approached him, dismounted, went to and fro, and strove to serve him. He saw the garment she was wrapped in fall down from her shoulders: he saw her countenance, her figure, vanish in their radiance. All the dreams of his youth now fastened on this image. Here he conceived he had at length beheld the noble, the heroic, Clorinda with his own eyes; and again he bethought him of that royal youth, to whose sick-bed the lovely, sympathising princess came in her modest meekness.

"May it not be," said he often to himself in secret, "that, in youth as in sleep, the images of coming things hover round us, and mysteriously become visible to our unobstructed eyes? May not the seeds of what is to betide us be already scattered by the hand of Fate? may not a foretaste of the fruits we yet hope to gather possibly be given us?"

His sick-bed gave him leisure to repeat those scenes in every mood. A thousand times he called back the tone of that sweet voice: a thousand times he envied Philina, who had kissed that helpful hand. Often the whole incident appeared before him as a dream; and he would have reckoned it a fiction, if the white surtout had not been left behind to convince him that the vision had a real existence.

With the greatest care for this piece of apparel, he combined the most ardent wish to wear it. The first time he arose, he put it on, and was kept in fear all day lest it might be hurt by some stain or other injury.

CHAPTER X.

LAERTES visited his friend. He had not been present during that lively scene at the inn, being then confined to bed in an upper chamber. For his loss he was already in a great degree consoled: he helped himself with his customary, "What does it signify?" He detailed various laughable particulars about the company; particularly charging Frau Melina with lamenting the loss of her stillborn daughter, solely because she herself could not on that account enjoy the Old-German satisfaction of having a Mechthilde christened. As for her husband, it now appeared that he had been possessed of abundant cash, and even at first had by no means needed the advances which he had cajoled from Wilhelm. Melina's present plan was, to set off by the next post-wagon, and he meant to require of Wilhelm an introductory letter to his friend, Manager Serlo, in whose company, the present undertaking having gone to wreck, he now wished to establish himself.

For some days Mignon had been singularly quiet: when pressed with questions, she at length admitted that her right arm was out of joint. "Thou hast thy own folly to thank for that," observed Philina, and then told how the child had drawn her sword in the battle, and, seeing her friend in peril, had struck fiercely at the freebooters, one of whom had at length seized her by the arm, and pitched her to a side. They chid her for not sooner speaking of her ailment; but they easily saw that she was apprehensive of the surgeon, who had hitherto looked on her as a boy.

With a view to remove the mischief, she was made to keep her arm in a sling, which arrangement, too, displeased her; for now she was obliged to surrender most part of her share in the management and nursing of our friend to Philina. That pleasing sinner but showed herself the more active and attentive on this account.

One morning, on awakening, Wilhelm found himself strangely near to her. In the movements of sleep, he had hitched himself quite to the back of the spacious bed. Philina was lying across from the front part of it: she seemed to have fallen asleep on the bed while sitting there and reading. A book had dropped from her hand: she had sunk back; and her head was lying near his breast, over which her fair and now loosened hair was spread in streams. The disorder of sleep enlivened her charms more than art or purpose could have done: a childlike smiling rest hovered on her countenance. He looked at her for a time, and seemed to blame himself for the pleasure this gave him. He had viewed her attentively for some moments, when she began to awake. He softly closed his eyes, but could not help glimmering at her through his eyelashes, as she trimmed herself again, and went away to see about breakfast.

All the actors had at length successively announced themselves to Wilhelm; asking introductory letters, requiring money for their journey with more or less impatience and ill-breeding, and constantly receiving it, against Philina's will. It was in vain for her to tell our friend that the huntsman had already left a handsome sum with these people, and that accordingly they did but cozen him. To these remonstrances he gave no heed: on the contrary, the two had a sharp quarrel about it; which ended by Wilhelm signifying, once for all, that Philina must now join the rest of the company, and seek her fortune with Serlo.

For an instant or two she lost temper; but, speedily recovering her composure, she cried, "If I had but my fair-haired boy again, I should not care a fig for any of you." She meant Friedrich, who had vanished from the scene of battle, and never since appeared.

Next morning Mignon brought news to the bedside, that Philina had gone off by night; leaving all that belonged to Wilhelm very neatly laid out in the next room. He felt her absence; he had lost in her a faithful nurse, a cheerful companion; he was no longer used to be alone. But Mignon soon filled up the blank.

Ever since that light-minded beauty had been near the patient with her friendly cares, the little creature had by degrees drawn back, and remained silent and secluded in herself; but, the field being clear once more, she again came forth with her attentions and her love, again was eager in serving, and lively in entertaining, him.

CHAPTER XI.

WILHELM was rapidly approaching complete recovery: he now hoped to be upon his journey in a few days. He proposed no more to lead an aimless routine of existence: the steps of his career were henceforth to be calculated for an end. In the first place, he purposed to seek out that beneficent lady, and express the gratitude he felt to her; then to proceed without delay to his friend the manager, that he might do his utmost to assist the luckless company; intending, at the same time, to visit the commercial friends whom he had letters for, and to transact the business which had been entrusted to him. He was not without hope that fortune, as formerly, would favour him, and give him opportunity, by some lucky speculation, to repair his losses, and fill up the vacuity of his coffer.

The desire of again beholding his beautiful deliverer augmented every day. To settle his route, he took counsel with the clergyman, — a person well skilled in statistics and geography, and possessing a fine collection of charts and books. They two searched for the place which this noble family had chosen as their residence while the war continued: they searched for information respecting the family itself. But their place was to be found in no geography or map, and the heraldic manuals made no mention of their name.

Wilhelm grew uneasy; and, having mentioned the cause of his anxiety, the harper told him he had reason to believe that the huntsman, from whatever motive, had concealed the real designations.

Conceiving himself now to be in the immediate neighbourhood of his lovely benefactress, Wilhelm hoped he might obtain some tidings of her if he sent out the harper; but in this, too, he was deceived. Diligently as the old man kept inquiring, he could find no trace of her. Of late days a number of quick movements and unforeseen marches had taken place in that quarter; no one had particularly noticed the travelling party; and the ancient messenger, to avoid being taken for a Jewish spy, was obliged to return, and appear without any olive-leaf before his master and friend. He gave a strict account of his conduct in this commission, striving to keep far from him all suspicions of remissness. He endeavoured by every means to mitigate the trouble of our friend; bethought him of everything that he had learned from the huntsman, and advanced a number of conjectures; out of all which, one circumstance at length came to light, whereby Wilhelm could explain some enigmatic words of his vanished benefactress.

The freebooters, it appeared, had lain in wait, not for the wandering troop, but for that noble company, whom they rightly guessed to be provided with store of gold and valuables, and of whose movements they must have had precise intelligence. Whether the attack should be imputed to some free corps, to marauders, or to robbers, was uncertain. It was clear, however, that, by good fortune for the high and rich company, the poor and low had first arrived upon the place, and undergone the fate which was provided for the others. It was to this that the lady's words referred, which Wilhelm yet well recollected. If he might now be happy and contented, that a prescient Genius had selected him for the sacrifice, which saved a perfect mortal, he was, on the other hand, nigh desperate, when he thought that all hope of finding her and seeing her again was, at least for the present, completely gone.

What increased this singular emotion still further, was the likeness which he thought he had observed between the countess and the beautiful unknown. They resembled one another as two sisters may, of whom neither can be called the younger or the elder, for they seem to be twins.

The recollection of the amiable countess was to Wilhelm infinitely sweet. He recalled her image but too willingly into his memory. But anon the figure of the noble Amazon would step between: one vision melted and changed into the other, and the form of neither would abide with him.

A new resemblance — the similarity of their handwritings — naturally struck him with still greater wonder. He had a charming song in the countess's hand laid up in his portfolio; and in the surtout he had found a little note, inquiring with much tender care about the health of an uncle.

Wilhelm was convinced that his benefactress must have penned this billet; that it must have been sent from one chamber to another, at some inn during their journey, and put into the coat pocket by the uncle. He held both papers together; and, if the regular and graceful letters of the countess had already pleased him much, he found in the similar but freer lines of the stranger a flowing harmony which could not be described. The note contained nothing; yet the strokes of it seemed to affect him, as the presence of their fancied writer once had done.

He fell into a dreamy longing; and well accordant with his feelings was the song which at that instant Mignon and the harper began to sing, with a touching expression, in the form of an irregular duet.

"'Tis but who longing knows,
My grief can measure.
Alone, reft of repose,
All joy, all pleasure,

I thither look to those
Soft lines of azure.
Ah! far is he who knows
Me, and doth treasure.
I faint, my bosom glows
'Neath pain's sore pressure.
'Tis but who longing knows,
My grief can measure."

— *Editor's Version.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE soft allurements of his dear presiding angel, far from leading our friend to any one determined path, did but nourish and increase the unrest he had previously experienced. A secret fire was gliding through his veins: objects distinct and indistinct alternated within his soul, and awoke unspeakable desire. At one time he wished for a horse, at another for wings; and not till it seemed impossible that he could stay, did he look round him to discover whither he was wanting to go.

The threads of his destiny had become so strangely entangled, he wished to see its curious knots unravelled, or cut in two. Often when he heard the tramp of a horse, or the rolling of a carriage, he would run to the window, and look out, in hopes it might be some one seeking him, — some one, even though it were by chance, bringing him intelligence and certainty and joy. He told stories to himself, how his friend Werner might visit these parts, and come upon him; how, perhaps, Mariana might appear. The sound of every post's horn threw him into agitation. It would be Melina sending news to him of his adventures: above all, it would be the huntsman coming back to carry him to the beauty he worshipped.

Of all these possibilities, unhappily no one occurred: he was forced at last to return to the company of himself; and, in again looking through the past, there was one circumstance which, the more he viewed and weighed it, grew the more offensive and intolerable to him. It was his unprosperous generalship, of which

he never thought without vexation. For although, on the evening of that luckless day, he had produced a pretty fair defence of his conduct when accused by the company, yet he could not hide from himself that he was guilty. On the contrary, in hypochondriac moments, he took the blame of the whole misfortune.

Self-love exaggerates our faults as well as our virtues. Wilhelm thought he had awakened confidence in himself, had guided the will of the rest; that, led by inexperience and rashness, they had ventured on, till a danger seized them, for which they were no match. Loud as well as silent reproaches had then assailed him; and if, in their sorrowful condition, he had promised the company, misguided by him, never to forsake them till their loss had been repaid with usury, this was but another folly for which he had to blame himself, — the folly of presuming to take upon his single shoulders a misfortune that was spread over many. One instant he accused himself of uttering this promise, under the excitement and the pressure of the moment; the next, he again felt that this generous presentation of his hand, which no one deigned to accept, was but a light formality compared with the vow his heart had taken. He meditated means of being kind and useful to them: he found every cause conspire to quicken his visit to Serlo. Accordingly he packed his things together; and without waiting his complete recovery, without listening to the counsel of the parson or of the surgeon, he hastened, in the strange society of Mignon and the harper, to escape the inactivity in which his fate had once more too long detained him.

CHAPTER XIII.

SERLO received him with open arms, crying as he met him, "Is it you? Do I see you again? You have scarcely changed at all. Is your love for that noblest of arts still as lively and strong? So glad am I at your arrival, that I even feel no longer the mistrust your last letters had excited in me."

Wilhelm asked with surprise for a clearer explanation.

"You have treated me," said Serlo, "not like an old friend, but as if I were a great lord, to whom with a safe conscience you might recommend useless people. Our destiny depends on the opinion of the public; and I fear Herr Melina and his suite can hardly be received among us."

Wilhelm tried to say something in their favour; but Serlo began to draw so merciless a picture of them, that our friend was happy when a lady came into the room, and put a stop to the discussion. She was introduced to him as Aurelia, the sister of his friend; she received him with extreme kindness; and her conversation was so pleasing, that he did not even remark a shade of sorrow visible on her expressive countenance, to which it lent peculiar interest.

For the first time during many months, Wilhelm felt once more in his proper element. Of late in talking, he had merely found submissive listeners, and even these not always; but now he had the happiness to speak with critics and artists, who not only fully understood him, but repaid his observations by others equally instructive. With wonderful vivacity they

travelled through the latest plays, with wonderful correctness judged them. The decisions of the public they could try and estimate: they speedily threw light on each other's thoughts.

Loving Shakespeare as our friend did, he failed not to lead round the conversation to the merits of that dramatist. Expressing, as he entertained, the liveliest hopes of the new epoch which these exquisite productions must form in Germany, he erelong introduced his "Hamlet," which play had busied him so much of late.

Serlo declared that he would long ago have represented the play, had it at all been possible, and that he himself would willingly engage to act Polonius. He added, with a smile, "An Ophelia, too, will certainly turn up, if we had but a prince."

Wilhelm did not notice that Aurelia seemed a little hurt at her brother's sarcasm. Our friend was in his proper vein, becoming copious and didactic, expounding how he would have "Hamlet" played. He circumstantially delivered to his hearers the opinions we before saw him busied with; taking all the trouble possible to make his notion of the matter acceptable, skeptical as Serlo showed himself regarding it. "Well, then," said the latter finally, "suppose we grant you all this, what will you explain by it?"

"Much, everything," said Wilhelm. "Conceive a prince such as I have painted him, and that his father suddenly dies. Ambition and the love of rule are not the passions that inspire him. As a king's son, he would have been contented; but now he is first constrained to consider the difference which separates a sovereign from a subject. The crown was not hereditary; yet his father's longer possession of it would have strengthened the pretensions of an only son, and secured his hopes of succession. In place of this, he now beholds himself excluded by his uncle, in spite of specious promises, most probably for ever. He is

now poor in goods and favour, and a stranger in the scene which from youth he had looked upon as his inheritance. His temper here assumes its first mournful tinge. He feels that now he is not more, that he is less, than a private nobleman; he offers himself as the servant of every one; he is not courteous and condescending, he is needy and degraded.

"His past condition he remembers as a vanished dream. It is in vain that his uncle strives to cheer him, to present his situation in another point of view. The feeling of his nothingness will not leave him.

"The second stroke that came upon him wounded deeper, bowed still more. It was the marriage of his mother. The faithful, tender son had yet a mother, when his father passed away. He hoped, in the company of his surviving noble-minded parent, to reverence the heroic form of the departed; but his mother, too, he loses; and it is something worse than death that robs him of her. The trustful image, which a good child loves to form of its parents, is gone. With the dead there is no help, on the living no hold. Moreover, she is a woman; and her name is Frailty, like that of all her sex.

"Now only does he feel completely bowed down, now only orphaned; and no happiness of life can repay what he has lost. Not reflective or sorrowful by nature, reflection and sorrow have become for him a heavy obligation. It is thus that we see him first enter on the scene. I do not think that I have mixed aught foreign with the play, or overcharged a single feature of it."

Serlo looked at his sister, and said, "Did I give thee a false picture of our friend? He begins well: he has still many things to tell us, many to persuade us of." Wilhelm asseverated loudly, that he meant not to persuade, but to convince: he begged for another moment's patience.

"Figure to yourselves this youth," cried he, "this son of princes; conceive him vividly, bring his state before your eyes, and then observe him when he learns that his father's spirit walks; stand by him in the terrors of the night, when even the venerable ghost appears before him. He is seized with boundless horror; he speaks to the mysterious form; he sees it beckon him; he follows and hears. The fearful accusation of his uncle rings in his ears, the summons to revenge, and the piercing, oft-repeated prayer, Remember me!

"And, when the ghost has vanished, who is it that stands before us? A young hero panting for vengeance? A prince by birth, rejoicing to be called to punish the usurper of his crown? No! trouble and astonishment take hold of the solitary young man; he grows bitter against smiling villains, swears that he will not forget the spirit, and concludes with the significant ejaculation,—

"'The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!'

"In these words, I imagine, will be found the key to Hamlet's whole procedure. To me it is clear that Shakespeare meant, in the present case, to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it. In this view the whole play seems to me to be composed. There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom: the roots expand, the jar is shivered.

"A lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden it cannot bear and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him: the present is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of him,—

not in themselves impossibilities, but such for him. He winds and turns, and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind; at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts, yet still without recovering his peace of mind."

CHAPTER XIV.

SEVERAL people entering interrupted the discussion. They were musical *dilettanti*, who commonly assembled at Serlo's once a week, and formed a little concert. Serlo himself loved music much: he used to maintain, that a player without taste for it never could attain a distinct conception and feeling of the scenic art. "As a man performs," he would observe, "with far more ease and dignity when his gestures are accompanied and guided by a tune; so the player ought, in idea as it were, to set to music even his prose parts, that he may not monotonously slight them over in his individual style, but treat them in suitable alternation by time and measure."

Aurelia seemed to give but little heed to what was passing: at last she conducted Wilhelm to another room; and going to the window, and looking out at the starry sky, she said to him, "You have more to tell us about Hamlet: I will not hurry you, — my brother must hear it as well as I; but let me beg to know your thoughts about Ophelia."

"Of her there cannot much be said," he answered; "for a few master-strokes complete her character. The whole being of Ophelia floats in sweet and ripe sensation. Kindness for the prince, to whose hand she may aspire, flows so spontaneously, her tender heart obeys its impulses so unresistingly, that both father and brother are afraid: both give her warning harshly and directly. Decorum, like the thin lawn upon her bosom, cannot hide the soft, still movements of her heart: it, on the contrary, betrays them. Her fancy is smit; her silent

modesty breathes amiable desire; and, if the friendly goddess Opportunity should shake the tree, its fruit would fall."

"And then," said Aurelia, "when she beholds herself forsaken, cast away, despised; when all is inverted in the soul of her crazed lover, and the highest changes to the lowest, and, instead of the sweet cup of love, he offers her the bitter cup of woe" —

"Her heart breaks," cried Wilhelm; "the whole structure of her being is loosened from its joinings; her father's death strikes fiercely against it, and the fair edifice altogether crumbles into fragments."

Our friend had not observed with what expressiveness Aurelia pronounced those words. Looking only at this work of art, at its connection and completeness, he dreamed not that his auditress was feeling quite a different influence; that a deep sorrow of her own was vividly awakened in her breast by these dramatic shadows.

Aurelia's head was still resting on her arms; and her eyes, now full of tears, were turned to the sky. At last, no longer able to conceal her secret grief, she seized both hands of her friend, and exclaimed, while he stood surprised before her, "Forgive, forgive a heavy heart! I am girt and pressed together by these people; from my hard-hearted brother I must seek to hide myself; your presence has untied these bonds. My friend!" continued she, "it is but a few minutes since we saw each other first, and already you are going to become my confidant." She could scarcely end the words, and sank upon his shoulder. "Think not worse of me," she said, with sobs, "that I disclose myself to you so hastily, that I am so weak before you. Be my friend, remain my friend: I shall deserve it." He spoke to her in his kindest manner, but in vain: her tears still flowed, and choked her words.

At this moment Serlo entered, most unwelcomely,

and, most unexpectedly, Philina, with her hand in his. "Here is your friend," said he to her: "he will be glad to welcome you."

"What!" cried Wilhelm in astonishment: "are you here?" With a modest, settled mien, she went up to him; bade him welcome; praised Serlo's goodness, who, she said, without merit on her part, but purely in the hope of her improvement, had agreed to admit her into his accomplished troop. She behaved, all the while, in a friendly manner toward Wilhelm, yet with a dignified distance.

But this dissimulation lasted only till the other two were gone. Aurelia having left them, that she might conceal her trouble, and Serlo being called away, Philina first looked very sharply at the doors, to see that both were really out; then began skipping to and fro about the room, as if she had been mad; at last dropped down upon the floor, like to die of giggling and laughing. She then sprang up, patted and flattered our friend; rejoicing above measure that she had been clever enough to go before, and spy the land, and get herself nestled in.

"Pretty things are going on here," she said; "just of the sort I like. Aurelia has had a hapless love-affair with some nobleman, who seems to be a very stately person, one whom I myself could like to see some day. He has left her a memorial, or I much mistake. There is a boy running about the house, of three years old or so: the papa must be a very pretty fellow. Commonly I cannot suffer children, but this brat quite delights me. I have calculated Aurelia's business. The death of her husband, the new acquaintance, the child's age, — all things agree.

"But now her spark has gone his ways: for a year she has not seen a glimpse of him. She is beside herself and inconsolable on this account. The more fool she! Her brother has a dancing-girl in his troop

with whom he stands on pretty terms; an actress with whom he is intimate; in the town, some other women whom he courts; I, too, am on his list. The more fool he! Of the rest thou shalt hear to-morrow. And now one word about Philina, whom thou knowest: the arch-fool is fallen in love with thee." She swore it was true and prime sport. She earnestly requested Wilhelm to fall in love with Aurelia, for then the chase would be worth beholding. "She pursues her faithless swain, thou her, I thee, her brother me. If that will not divert us for a quarter of a year, I engage to die at the first episode which occurs in this four times complicated tale." She begged of him not to spoil her trade, and to show her such respect as her external conduct should deserve.

CHAPTER XV.

NEXT morning Wilhelm went to visit Frau Melina, but found her not at home. On inquiring here for the other members of the wandering community, he learned that Philina had invited them to breakfast. Out of curiosity, he hastened thither, and found them all in very good spirits and of good comfort. The cunning creature had collected them, was treating them with chocolate, and giving them to understand that some prospects still remained for them; that, by her influence, she hoped to convince the manager how advantageous it would be for him to introduce so many clever hands among his company. They listened to her with attention; swallowed cup after cup of her chocolate; thought the girl was not so bad, after all, and went away proposing to themselves to speak whatever good of her they could.

"Do you think, then," said our friend, who stayed behind, "that Serlo will determine to retain our comrades?" "Not at all," replied Philina; "nor do I care a fig for it. The sooner they are gone, the better! Laertes alone I could wish to keep: the rest we shall by and by pack off."

Next she signified to Wilhelm her firm persuasion that he should no longer hide his talent, but, under the direction of a Serlo, go upon the boards. She was lavish in her praises of the order, the taste, the spirit, which prevailed in this establishment: she spoke so flatteringly to Wilhelm, with such admiration of his gifts, that his heart and his imagination were advancing toward this proposal as fast as his understanding and

his reason were retreating from it. He concealed his inclination from himself and from Philina, and passed a restless day, unable to resolve on visiting his trading correspondents, to receive the letters which might there be lying for him. The anxieties of his people during all this time he easily conceived; yet he shrank from the precise account of them, particularly at the present time, as he promised to himself a great and pure enjoyment from the exhibition of a new play that evening.

Serlo had refused to let him witness the rehearsal. "You must see us on the best side," he observed, "before we can allow you to look into our cards."

The performance, however, where our friend did not fail to be present, yielded him a high satisfaction. It was the first time he had ever seen a theatre in such perfection. The actors were evidently all possessed of excellent gifts, superior capacities, and a high, clear notion of their art: they were not equal, but they mutually restrained and supported one another; each breathed ardour into those around him; throughout all their acting, they showed themselves decided and correct. You soon felt that Serlo was the soul of the whole: as an individual, he appeared to much advantage. A merry humour, a measured vivacity, a settled feeling of propriety, combined with a great gift of imitation, were to be observed in him the moment he appeared upon the stage. The inward contentment of his being seemed to spread itself over all that looked on him; and the intellectual style in which he could so easily and gracefully express the finest shadings of his part, excited more delight, as he could conceal the art which, by long-continued practice, he had made his own.

Aurelia, his sister, was not inferior: she obtained still greater approbation; for she touched the souls of the audience, which he had it in his power to exhilarate and amuse.

After a few days had passed pleasantly enough, Aurelia sent to inquire for our friend. He hastened to her: she was lying on a sofa; she seemed to be suffering from headache; her whole frame had visibly a feverish movement. Her eye lighted up as she noticed Wilhelm. "Pardon me!" she cried, as he entered: "the trust you have inspired me with has made me weak. Till now I have contrived to bear up against my woes in secret; nay, they gave me strength and consolation: but now, I know not how it is, you have loosened the bands of silence. You will now, even against your will, take part in the battle I am fighting with myself!"

Wilhelm answered her in kind and obliging terms. He declared that her image and her sorrows had not ceased to hover in his thoughts; that he longed for her confidence, and devoted himself to be her friend.

While he spoke, his eyes were attracted to the boy, who sat before her on the floor, and was busy rattling a multitude of playthings. This child, as Philina had observed, might be about three years of age; and Wilhelm now conceived how that giddy creature, seldom elevated in her phraseology, had likened it to the sun. For its cheerful eyes and full countenance were shaded by the finest golden locks, which flowed around in copious curls; dark, slender, softly bending eyebrows showed themselves upon a brow of dazzling whiteness; and the living tinge of health was glancing on its cheeks. "Sit by me," said Aurelia: "you are looking at the happy child with admiration; in truth, I took it into my arms with joy; I keep it carefully; yet, by it, too, I can measure the extent of my sufferings; for they seldom let me feel the worth of such a gift.

"Allow me," she continued, "to speak to you about myself and my destiny; for I have it much at heart that you should not misunderstand me. I thought I should have a few calm instants; and, accordingly, I

sent for you. You are now here, and the thread of my narrative is lost.

"'One more forsaken woman in the world!' you will say. You are a man. You are thinking, 'What a noise she makes, the fool, about a necessary evil; which, certainly as death, awaits a woman, when such is the fidelity of men!' O my friend! if my fate were common, I would gladly undergo a common evil; but it is so singular! why cannot I present it to you in a mirror, — why not command some one to tell it you? Oh! had I, had I been seduced, surprised, and afterward forsaken, there would then still be comfort in despair; but I am far more miserable. I have been my own deceiver; I have wittingly betrayed myself; and this, this, is what shall never be forgiven me."

"With noble feelings, such as yours," said Wilhelm, "you cannot be entirely unhappy."

"And do you know to what I am indebted for my feelings?" asked Aurelia. "To the worst education that ever threatened to contaminate a girl; to the vilest examples for misleading the senses and inclinations.

"My mother dying early, the fairest years of my youth were spent with an aunt, whose principle it was to despise the laws of decency. She resigned herself headlong to every impulse, careless whether the object of it proved her tyrant or her slave, so she might forget herself in wild enjoyment.

"By children, with the pure, clear vision of innocence, what ideas of men were necessarily formed in such a scene! How stolid, brutally bold, importunate, unmannerly, was every one she allured! How sated, empty, insolent, and insipid, as soon as he had had his wishes gratified! I have seen this woman live, for years, humbled under the control of the meanest creatures. What incidents she had to undergo! With what a front she contrived to accommodate herself to

her destiny; nay, with how much skill, to wear these shameful fetters!

"It was thus, my friend, that I became acquainted with your sex; and deeply did I hate it, when, as I imagined, I observed that even tolerable men, in their conduct to ours, appeared to renounce every honest feeling, of which nature might otherwise have made them capable.

"Unhappily, moreover, on such occasions, a multitude of painful discoveries about my own sex were forced upon me; and, in truth, I was then wiser, as a girl of sixteen, than I now am, now that I scarcely understand myself. Why are we so wise when young, — so wise, and ever growing less so?"

The boy began to make a noise: Aurelia became impatient, and rang. An old woman came to take him out. "Hast thou toothache still?" said Aurelia to the crone, whose face was wrapped in cloth. "Unsufferable," said the other, with a muffled voice, then lifted the boy, who seemed to like going with her, and carried him away.

Scarcely was he gone, when Aurelia began bitterly to weep. "I am good for nothing," cried she, "but lamenting and complaining; and I feel ashamed to lie before you like a miserable worm. My recollection is already fled: I can relate no more." She faltered, and was silent. Her friend, unwilling to reply with a commonplace, and unable to reply with anything particularly applicable, pressed her hand, and looked at her for some time without speaking. Thus embarrassed, he at length took up a book, which he noticed lying on the table before him: it was Shakespeare's works, and open at "Hamlet."

Serlo, at this moment entering, inquired about his sister, and, looking in the book which our friend had hold of, cried, "So you are again at 'Hamlet?' Very good! Many doubts have arisen in me, which seem

not a little to impair the canonical aspect of the play as you would have it viewed. The English themselves have admitted that its chief interest concludes with the third act; the last two lagging sorrily on, and scarcely uniting with the rest: and certainly about the end it seems to stand stock-still."

"It is very possible," said Wilhelm, "that some individuals of a nation, which has so many masterpieces to feel proud of, may be led by prejudice and narrowness of mind to form false judgments; but this cannot hinder us from looking with our own eyes, and doing justice where we see it due. I am very far from censuring the plan of 'Hamlet:' on the other hand, I believe there never was a grander one invented; nay, it is not invented, it is real."

"How do you demonstrate that?" inquired Serlo.

"I will not demonstrate anything," said Wilhelm: "I will merely show you what my own conceptions of it are."

Aurelia raised herself from her cushion, leaned upon her hand, and looked at Wilhelm, who, with the firmest assurance that he was in the right, went on as follows: "It pleases us, it flatters us, to see a hero acting on his own strength, loving and hating at the bidding of his heart, undertaking and completing, casting every obstacle aside, and attaining some great end. Poets and historians would willingly persuade us that so proud a lot may fall to man. In 'Hamlet' we are taught another lesson: the hero is without a plan, but the play is full of plan. Here we have no villain punished on some self-conceived and rigidly accomplished scheme of vengeance: a horrid deed is done; it rolls along with all its consequences, dragging with it even the guiltless: the guilty perpetrator would, as it seems, evade the abyss made ready for him; yet he plunges in, at the very point by which he thinks he shall escape, and happily complete his course.

"For it is the property of crime to extend its mischief over innocence, as it is of virtue to extend its blessings over many that deserve them not; while frequently the author of the one or of the other is not punished or rewarded at all. Here in this play of ours, how strange! The Pit of darkness sends its spirit and demands revenge: in vain! All circumstances tend one way, and hurry to revenge: in vain! Neither earthly nor infernal thing may bring about what is reserved for fate alone. The hour of judgment comes; the wicked falls with the good; one race is mowed away, that another may spring up."

After a pause, in which they looked at one another, Serlo said, "You pay no great compliment to Providence, in thus exalting Shakespeare; and besides, it appears to me, that for the honour of your poet, as others for the honour of Providence, you ascribe to him an object and a plan such as he himself had never thought of."

CHAPTER XVI.

"LET me also put a question," said Aurelia. "I have looked at Ophelia's part again: I am contented with it, and confident, that, under certain circumstances, I could play it. But tell me, should not the poet have furnished the insane maiden with another sort of songs? Could not some fragments out of melancholy ballads be selected for this purpose! Why put double meanings and lascivious insipidities in the mouth of this noble-minded girl?"

"Dear friend," said Wilhelm, "even here I cannot yield you one iota. In these singularities, in this apparent impropriety, a deep sense is hid. Do we not understand from the very first what the mind of the good, soft-hearted girl was busied with? Silently she lived within herself, yet she scarce concealed her wishes, her longing: the tones of desire were in secret ringing through her soul; and how often may she have attempted, like an unskilful nurse, to lull her senses to repose with songs which only kept them more awake? But at last, when her self-command is altogether gone, when the secrets of her heart are hovering on her tongue, that tongue betrays her; and in the innocence of insanity she solaces herself, unmindful of king or queen, with the echo of her loose and well-beloved songs, — 'To-morrow is Saint Valentine's Day,' and 'By Gis and by Saint Charity.'"

He had not finished speaking, when all at once an extraordinary scene took place before him, which he could not in any way explain.

Serlo had walked once or twice up and down the room, without evincing any special object. On a sudden, he stepped forward to Aurelia's dressing-table, caught hastily at something that was lying there, and hastened to the door with his booty. No sooner did Aurelia notice this, than, springing up, she threw herself in his way, laid hold of him with boundless vehemence, and had dexterity enough to clutch an end of the article he was carrying off. They struggled and wrestled with great obstinacy, twisted and threw each other sharply around; he laughed; she exerted all her strength; and as Wilhelm hastened toward them, to separate and soothe them, Aurelia sprang aside with a naked dagger in her hand; while Serlo cast the scabbard, which had stayed with him, angrily upon the floor. Wilhelm started back astonished; and his dumb wonder seemed to ask the cause why so violent a strife, about so strange an implement, had taken place between them.

"You shall judge betwixt us," said the brother. "What business she with sharp steel? Do but look at it. That dagger is unfit for any actress, — point like a needle's, edge like a razor's! What good's the farce? Passionate as she is, she will one day chance to do herself a mischief. I have a heart's hatred at such singularities: a serious thought of that sort is insane, and so dangerous a plaything is not in taste."

"I have it back!" exclaimed Aurelia, and held the polished blade aloft: "I will now keep my faithful friend more carefully. Pardon me," she cried, and kissed the steel, "that I have so neglected thee."

Serlo was like to grow seriously angry. "Take it as thou wilt, brother," she continued: "how knowest thou but, under this form, a precious talisman may have been given me, so that, in extreme need, I may find help and counsel in it? Must all be hurtful that looks dangerous?"

"Such talk without a meaning might drive one mad," said Serlo, and left the room with suppressed indignation. Aurelia put the dagger carefully into its sheath, and placed it in her bosom. "Let us now resume the conversation which our foolish brother has disturbed," said she, as Wilhelm was beginning to put questions on the subject of this quarrel.

"I must admit your picture of Ophelia to be just," continued she; "I cannot now misunderstand the object of the poet: I must pity; though, as you paint her, I shall rather pity her than sympathise with her. But allow me here to offer a remark, which in these few days you have frequently suggested to me. I observe with admiration the correct, keen, penetrating glance with which you judge of poetry, especially dramatic poetry: the deepest abysses of invention are not hidden from you, the finest touches of representation cannot escape you. Without ever having viewed the objects in nature, you recognise the truth of their images: there seems, as it were, a presentiment of all the universe to lie in you, which by the harmonious touch of poetry is awakened and unfolded. For in truth," continued she, "from without, you receive not much: I have scarcely seen a person that so little knew, so totally misknew, the people he lived with, as you do. Allow me to say it: in hearing you expound the mysteries of Shakespeare, one would think you had just descended from a synod of the gods, and had listened there while they were taking counsel how to form men; in seeing you transact with your fellows, I could imagine you to be the first large-born child of the Creation, standing agape, and gazing with strange wonderment and edifying good nature at lions and apes and sheep and elephants, and true-heartedly addressing them as your equals, simply because they were there, and in motion like yourself."

"The feeling of my ignorance in this respect," said

Wilhelm, "often gives me pain; and I should thank you, worthy friend, if you would help me to get a little better insight into life. From youth, I have been accustomed to direct the eyes of my spirit inwards rather than outwards; and hence it is very natural, that, to a certain extent, I should be acquainted with man, while of men I have not the smallest knowledge."

"In truth," said Aurelia, "I at first suspected, that, in giving such accounts of the people whom you sent to my brother, you meant to make sport of us: when I compared your letters with the merits of these persons, it seemed very strange."

Aurelia's remarks, well founded as they might be, and willing as our friend was to confess himself deficient in this matter, carried with them something painful, nay, offensive, to him; so that he grew silent, and retired within himself, partly to avoid showing any irritated feeling, partly to search his mind for the truth or error of the charge.

"Let not this alarm you," said Aurelia: "the light of the understanding it is always in our power to reach, but this fulness of the heart no one can give us. If you are destined for an artist, you cannot long enough retain the dim-sightedness and innocence of which I speak; it is the beautiful hull upon the young bud; woe to us if we are forced too soon to burst it! Surely it were well, if we never knew what the people are for whom we work and study.

"Oh! I, too, was in that happy case, when I first betrod the stage, with the loftiest opinion of myself and of my nation. What a people, in my fancy, were the Germans! what a people might they yet become! I addressed this people, raised above them by a little joinery, separated from them by a row of lamps, whose glancing and vapour threw an indistinctness over everything before me. How welcome was the tumult of applause which sounded to me from the crowd! how

gratefully did I accept the present offered me unanimously by so many hands! For a time I rocked myself in these ideas: I affected the multitude, and was again affected by them. With my public I was on the fairest footing: I imagined that I felt a perfect harmony betwixt us, and that on each occasion I beheld before me the best and noblest of the land.

"Unhappily it was not the actress alone that inspired these friends of the stage with interest: they likewise made pretensions to the young and lively girl. They gave me to understand, in terms distinct enough, that my duty was, not only to excite emotion in them, but to share it with them personally. This, unluckily, was not my business: I wished to elevate their minds; but, to what they called their hearts, I had not the slightest claim. Yet now men of all ranks, ages, and characters, by turns afflicted me with their addresses; and it did seem hard that I could not, like an honest young woman, shut my door, and spare myself such a quantity of labour.

"The men appeared, for most part, much the same as I had been accustomed to about my aunt; and here again I should have felt disgusted with them, had not their peculiarities and insipidities amused me. As I was compelled to see them, in the theatre, in open places, in my house, I formed the project of spying out their follies; and my brother helped me with alacrity to execute it. And if you reflect, that up from the whisking shopman and the conceited merchant's son, to the polished, calculating man of the world, the bold soldier, and the impetuous prince, all in succession passed in review before me, each in his way endeavouring to found his small romance, you will pardon me if I conceived that I had gained some acquaintance with my nation.

"The fantastically dizened student; the awkward, humbly proud man of letters; the sleek-fed, gouty

canon; the solemn, heedful man of office; the heavy country baron; the smirking, vapid courtier; the young, erring parson; the cool as well as the quick and sharply speculating merchant, — all these I have seen in motion; and I swear to you, that there were few among them fitted to inspire me even with a sentiment of toleration: on the contrary, I felt it altogether irksome to collect, with tedium and annoyance, the suffrages of fools; to pocket those applauses in detail, which in their accumulated state had so delighted me, which in the gross I had appropriated with such pleasure.

"If I expected a rational compliment upon my acting, if I hoped that they would praise an author whom I valued, they were sure to make one empty observation on the back of another, and to name some vapid play in which they wished to see me act. If I listened in their company, to hear if some noble, brilliant, witty thought had met with a response among them, and would reappear from some of them in proper season, it was rare that I could catch an echo of it. An error that had happened, a mispronunciation, a provincialism of some actor, such were the weighty points by which they held fast, beyond which they could not pass. I knew not, in the end, to what hand I should turn: themselves they thought too clever to be entertained; and me they imagined they were well entertaining, if they romped and made noise enough about me. I began very cordially to despise them all: I felt as if the whole nation had, on purpose, deputed these people to debase it in my eyes. They appeared to me so clownish, so ill-bred, so wretchedly instructed, so void of pleasing qualities, so tasteless, I frequently exclaimed, 'No German can buckle his shoes, till he has learned to do it of some foreign nation!'

"You perceive how blind, how unjust and splenetic, I was; and, the longer it lasted, my spleen increased.

I might have killed myself with these things, but I fell into the contrary extreme: I married, or, rather, let myself be married. My brother, who had undertaken to conduct the theatre, wished much to have a helper. His choice lighted on a young man, who was not offensive to me, who wanted all that my brother had, — genius, vivacity, spirit, and impetuosity of mind; but who also in return had all that my brother wanted, — love of order, diligence, and precious gifts in housekeeping, and the management of money.

"He became my husband, I know not how: we lived together, I do not well know why. Suffice it to say, our affairs went prosperously forward. We drew a large income: of this my brother's activity was the cause. We lived with a moderate expenditure, and that was the merit of my husband. I thought no more about world or nation. With the world I had nothing to participate: my idea of the nation had faded away. When I entered on the scene, I did so that I might subsist: I opened my lips because I durst not continue silent, because I had come out to speak.

"Yet let me do the matter justice. I had altogether given myself up to the disposal of my brother. His objects were, applause and money; for, between ourselves, he has no dislike to hear his own praises; and his outlay is always great. I no longer played according to my own feeling, to my own conviction, but as he directed me; and, if I did it to his satisfaction, I was content. He steered entirely by the caprices of the public. Money flowed upon us: he could live according to his humour, and so we had good times with him.

"Thus had I fallen into a dull, handicraft routine. I spun out my days without joy or sympathy. My marriage was childless, and not of long continuance. My husband grew sick; his strength was visibly decaying; anxiety for him interrupted my general indif-

ference. It was at this time that I formed an acquaintance which opened a new life for me, — a new and quicker one, for it will soon be done."

She kept silence for a time, and then continued, "All at once my prattling humour falters: I have not the courage to go on. Let me rest a little. You shall not go, till you have learned the whole extent of my misfortune. Meanwhile, call in Mignon, and ask her what she wants."

The child had more than once been in the room, while Aurelia and our friend were talking. As they spoke lower on her entrance, she had glided out again, and was now sitting quietly in the hall, and waiting. Being bid return, she brought a book with her, which its form and binding showed to be a small geographical atlas. She had seen some maps, for the first time, at the parson's house, with great astonishment; had asked him many questions, and informed herself so far as possible about them. Her desire to learn seemed much excited by this new branch of knowledge. She now earnestly requested Wilhelm to purchase her the book; saying she had pawned her large silver buckle with the print-seller for it, and wished to have back the pledge to-morrow morning, as this evening it was late. Her request was granted; and she then began repeating several things she had already learned; at the same time, in her own way, making many very strange inquiries. Here again one might observe, that, with a mighty effort, she could comprehend but little and laboriously. So likewise was it with her writing, at which she still kept busied. She yet spoke very broken German: it was only when she opened her mouth to sing, when she touched her cithern, that she seemed to be employing an organ by which, in some degree, the workings of her mind could be disclosed and communicated.

Since we are at present on the subject, we may also

mention the perplexity which Wilhelm had of late experienced from certain parts of her procedure. When she came or went, wished him good morning or good night, she clasped him so firmly in her arms, and kissed him with such ardour, that often the violence of this expanding nature gave him serious fears. The spasmodic vivacity of her demeanour seemed daily to increase: her whole being moved in a restless stillness. She would never be without some piece of packthread to twist in her hands, some napkin to tie in knots, some paper or wood to chew. All her sports seemed but the channels which drained off some inward violent commotion. The only thing that seemed to cause her any cheerfulness was being near the boy Felix, with whom she could go on in a very dainty manner.

Aurelia, after a little rest, being now ready to explain to her friend a matter which lay very near her heart, grew impatient at the little girl's delay, and signified that she must go, — a hint, however, which the latter did not take; and at last, when nothing else would do, they sent her off expressly and against her will.

"Now or never," said Aurelia, "must I tell you the remainder of my story. Were my tenderly beloved and unjust friend but a few miles distant, I would say to you, 'Mount on horseback, seek by some means to get acquainted with him: on returning, you will certainly forgive me, and pity me with all your heart.' As it is, I can only tell you with words how amiable he was, and how much I loved him.

"It was at the critical season, when care for the illness of my husband had depressed my spirits, that I first became acquainted with this stranger. He had just returned from America, where, in company with some Frenchmen, he had served with much distinction under the colours of the United States.

"He addressed me with an easy dignity, a frank kindliness: he spoke about myself, my state, my acting, like an old acquaintance, so affectionately and distinctly, that now for the first time I enjoyed the pleasure of perceiving my existence reflected in the being of another. His judgments were just, though not severe; penetrating, yet not void of love. He showed no harshness: his pleasantry was courteous, with all his humour. He seemed accustomed to success with women; this excited my attention: he was never in the least importunate or flattering; this put me off my guard.

"In the town, he had intercourse with few: he was often on horseback, visiting his many friends in the neighbourhood, and managing the business of his house. On returning, he would frequently alight at my apartments; he treated my ever ailing husband with warm attention; he procured him mitigation of his sickness by a good physician. And, taking part in all that interested me, he allowed me to take part in all that interested him. He told me the history of his campaigns: he spoke of his invincible attachment to military life, of his family relations, of his present business. He kept no secret from me; he displayed to me his inmost thoughts, allowed me to behold the most secret corners of his soul: I became acquainted with his passions and his capabilities. It was the first time in my life that I enjoyed a cordial, intellectual intercourse with any living creature. I was attracted by him, borne along by him, before I thought about inquiring how it stood with me.

"Meanwhile I lost my husband, nearly just as I had taken him. The burden of theatrical affairs now fell entirely on me. My brother, not to be surpassed upon the stage, was never good for anything in economical concerns: I took the charge of all, at the same time studying my parts with greater diligence than ever. I

again played as of old, — nay, with new life, with quite another force. It was by reason of my friend, it was on his account, that I did so; yet my success was not always best when I knew him to be present. Once or twice he listened to me unobserved, and how pleasantly his unexpected applauses surprised me you may conceive.

"Certainly I am a strange creature. In every part I played, it seemed as if I had been speaking it in praise of him: for that was the temper of my heart, the words might be anything they pleased. Did I understand him to be present in the audience, I durst not venture to speak out with all my force; just as I would not press my love or praise on him to his face: was he absent, I had then free scope; I did my best, with a certain peacefulness, with a contentment not to be described. Applause once more delighted me; and, when I charmed the people, I longed to call down among them, 'This you owe to him!'

"Yes: my relation to the public, to the nation, had been altered by a wonder. On a sudden they again appeared to me in the most favourable light: I felt astonished at my former blindness.

"'How foolish,' said I often to myself, 'was it to revile a nation, — foolish, simply because it was a nation. Is it necessary, is it possible, that individual men should generally interest us much? Not at all! The only question is, whether in the great mass there exists a sufficient quantity of talent, force, and capability, which lucky circumstances may develop, which men of lofty minds may direct upon a common object.' I now rejoiced in discovering so little prominent originality among my countrymen; I rejoiced that they disdained not to accept of guidance from without; I rejoiced that they had found a leader.

"Lothario, — allow me to designate my friend by this, his first name, which I loved, — Lothario had

always presented the Germans to my mind on the side of valour, and shown me, that, when well commanded, there was no braver nation on the face of the earth; and I felt ashamed that I had never thought of this, the first quality of a people. History was known to him: he was in connection and correspondence with the most distinguished persons of the age. Young as he was, his eye was open to the budding youthhood of his country, to the silent labours of active and busy men in so many provinces of art. He afforded me a glimpse of Germany, — what it was and what it might be; and I blushed at having formed my judgment of a nation from the motley crowd that squeeze into the wardrobe of a theatre. He made me look upon it as a duty that I too, in my own department, should be true, spirited, enlivening. I now felt as if inspired every time I stepped upon the boards. Mediocre passages grew golden in my mouth: had any poet been at hand to support me adequately, I might have produced the most astonishing effects.

"So lived the young widow for a series of months. He could not do without me, and I felt exceedingly unhappy when he stayed away. He showed me the letters he received from his relations, from his amiable sister. He took an interest in the smallest circumstance that concerned me: more complete, more intimate, no union ever was than ours. The name of love was not mentioned. He went and came, came and went. And now, my friend, it is high time that you, too, should go."

CHAPTER XVII.

WILHELM could put off no longer the visiting of his commercial friends. He proceeded to their place with some anxiety, knowing he should there find letters from his people. He dreaded the reproofs which these would of course contain: it seemed likely also that notice had been given to his trading correspondents, concerning the perplexities and fears which his late silence had occasioned. After such a series of knightly adventures, he recoiled from the schoolboy aspect in which he must appear: he proposed within his mind to act with an air of sternness and defiance, and thus hide his embarrassment.

To his great wonder and contentment, however, all went off very easily and well. In the vast, stirring, busy counting-room, the men had scarcely time to seek him out his packet: his delay was but alluded to in passing. And on opening the letters of his father, and his friend Werner, he found them all of very innocent contents. His father, in hopes of an extensive journal, the keeping of which he had strongly recommended to his son at parting, giving him also a tabulary scheme for that purpose, seemed pretty well pacified about the silence of the first period; complaining only of a certain enigmatical obscurity in the last and only letter despatched, as we have seen, from the castle of the count. Werner joked in his way; told merry anecdotes, facetious burgh-news; and requested intelligence of friends and acquaintances, whom Wilhelm, in the large trading-city, would now meet with in great numbers. Our friend, extremely pleased at getting off so well, an-

swered without loss of a moment, in some very cheerful letters; promising his father a copious journal of his travels, with all the required geographical, statistical, and mercantile remarks. He had seen much on his journey, he said, and hoped to make a tolerably large manuscript out of these materials. He did not observe that he was almost in the same case as he had once experienced before, when he assembled an audience and lit his lamps to represent a play which was not written, still less got by heart. Accordingly, so soon as he commenced the actual work of composition, he became aware that he had much to say about emotions and thoughts, and many experiences of the heart and spirit, but not a word concerning outward objects, on which, as he now discovered, he had not bestowed the least attention.

In this embarrassment, the acquisitions of his friend Laertes came very seasonably to his aid. Custom had united these young people, unlike one another as they were; and Laertes, with all his failings and singularities, was actually an interesting man. Endowed with warm and pleasurable senses, he might have reached old age without reflecting for a moment on his situation. But his ill-fortune and his sickness had robbed him of the pure feelings of youth, and opened for him instead of it a view into the transitoriness, the discontinuity, of man's existence. Hence had arisen a humourous, flighty, rhapsodical way of thinking about all things, or, rather, of uttering the immediate impressions they produced on him. He did not like to be alone; he strolled about all the coffee-houses and *tables-d'hôte;* and, when he did stay at home, books of travels were his favourite, nay, his only, kind of reading. Having lately found a large circulating library, he had been enabled to content his taste in this respect to the full; and erelong half the world was figuring in his faithful memory.

It was easy for him, therefore, to speak comfort to

his friend, when the latter had disclosed his utter lack of matter for the narrative so solemnly promised by him. "Now is the time for a stroke of art," said Laertes, "that shall have no fellow!

"Has not Germany been travelled over, cruised over, walked, crept, and flown over, repeatedly from end to end? And has not every German traveller the royal privilege of drawing from the public a repayment of the great or small expenses he may have incurred while travelling? Give me your route previous to our meeting: the rest I know already. I will find you helps and sources of information: of miles that were never measured, populations that were never counted, we shall give them plenty. The revenues of provinces we will take from almanacs and tables, which, as all men know, are the most authentic documents. On these we will ground our political discussions: we shall not fail in side-glances at the ruling powers. One or two princes we will paint as true fathers of their country, that we may gain more ready credence in our allegations against others. If we do not travel through the residence of any noted man, we shall take care to meet such persons at the inn, and make them utter the most foolish stuff to us. Particularly, let us not forget to insert, with all its graces and sentiments, some love-story with a pastoral barmaid. I tell you, it shall be a composition which will not only fill father and mother with delight, but which booksellers themselves shall gladly pay you current money for."

They went accordingly to work, and both of them found pleasure in their labour. Wilhelm, in the meantime, frequenting the play at night, and conversing with Serlo and Aurelia by day, experienced the greatest satisfaction, and was daily more and more expanding his ideas, which had been too long revolving in the same narrow circle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was not without deep interest that he became acquainted with the history of Serlo's career. Piecemeal he learned it; for it was not the fashion of that extraordinary man to be confidential, or to speak of anything connectively. He had been, one may say, born and suckled in the theatre. While yet literally an infant, he had been produced upon the stage to move spectators, merely by his presence; for authors even then were acquainted with this natural and very guiltless mode of doing so. Thus his first "Father!" or "Mother!" in favourite pieces, procured him approbation, before he understood what was meant by that clapping of the hands. In the character of Cupid, he more than once descended, with terror, in his flying-gear; as harlequin, he used to issue from the egg; and, as a little chimney-sweep, to play the sharpest tricks.

Unhappily, the plaudits of these glancing nights were too bitterly repaid by sufferings in the intervening seasons. His father was persuaded that the minds of children could be kept awake and steadfast by no other means than blows: hence, in the studying of any part, he used to thrash him at stated periods, not because the boy was awkward, but that he might become more certainly and constantly expert. It was thus that in former times, while putting down a landmark, people were accustomed to bestow a hearty drubbing on the children who had followed them; and these, it was supposed, would recollect the place exactly to the latest day of their lives. Serlo waxed in stature, and showed the finest capabilities of spirit and

of body, — in particular, an admirable pliancy at once in his thoughts, looks, movements, and gestures. His gift of imitation was beyond belief. When still a boy, he could mimic persons, so that you would think you saw them; though in form, age, and disposition, they might be entirely unlike him, and unlike each other. Nor with all this, did he want the knack of suiting himself to his circumstances, and picking out his way in life. Accordingly, so soon as he had grown in some degree acquainted with his strength, he very naturally eloped from his father, who, as the boy's understanding and dexterity increased, still thought it needful to forward their perfection by the harshest treatment.

Happy was the wild boy, now roaming free about the world, where his feats of waggery never failed to secure him a good reception. His lucky star first led him in the Christmas season to a cloister, where the friar, whose business it had been to arrange processions, and to entertain the Christian community by spiritual masquerades, having just died, Serlo was welcomed as a helping angel. On the instant he took up the part of Gabriel in the Annunciation, and did not by any means displease the pretty girl, who, acting the Virgin, very gracefully received his most obliging kiss, with external humility and inward pride. In their mysteries, he continued to perform the most important parts, and thought himself no slender personage, when at last, in the character of Martyr, he was mocked of the world, and beaten, and fixed upon the cross.

Some pagan soldiers had, on this occasion, played their parts a little *too* naturally. To be avenged on these heathen in the proper style, he took care at the Day of Judgment to have them decked out in gaudy clothes as emperors and kings; and at that moment when they, exceedingly contented with their situation, were about to take precedence of the rest in heaven, as they had done on earth, he, on a sudden, rushed upon

them in the shape of the Devil; and to the cordial edification of all the beggars and spectators, having thoroughly curried them with his oven-fork, he pushed them without mercy back into the chasm, where, in the midst of waving flame, they met with the sorriest welcome.

He was acute enough, however, to perceive that these crowned heads might feel offended at such bold procedure, and perhaps forget the reverence due to his privileged office of accuser and turnkey. So in all silence, before the millennium commenced, he withdrew, and betook him to a neighbouring town. Here a society of persons, denominated Children of Joy, received him with open arms. They were a set of clever, strong-headed, lively geniuses, who saw well enough that the sum of our existence, divided by reason, never gives an integer number, but that a surprising fraction is always left behind. At stated times, to get rid of this fraction, which impedes, and, if it is diffused over all the mass of our conduct, endangers us, was the object of the Children of Joy. For one day a week each of them in succession was a fool on purpose; and, during this, he in his turn exhibited to ridicule, in allegorical representations, whatever folly he had noticed in himself, or the rest, throughout the other six. This practice might be somewhat ruder than that constant training, in the course of which a man of ordinary morals is accustomed to observe, to warn, to punish, himself daily; but it was also merrier and surer. For as no Child of Joy concealed his bosom-folly, so he and those about him held it for simply what it was; whereas, on the other plan, by the help of self-deception, this same bosom-folly often gains the head authority within, and binds down reason to a secret servitude, at the very time when reason fondly hopes that she has long since chased it out-of-doors. The mask of folly circulated around in this society;

and each member was allowed, in his particular day, to decorate and characterise it with his own attributes or those of others. At the time of carnival, they assumed the greatest freedom, vying with the clergy in attempts to instruct and entertain the multitude. Their solemn figurative processions of Virtues and Vices, Arts and Sciences, Quarters of the World, and Seasons of the Year, bodied forth a number of conceptions, and gave images of many distant objects to the people, and hence were not without their use; while, on the other hand, the mummeries of the priesthood tended but to strengthen a tasteless superstition, already strong enough.

Here again young Serlo was altogether in his element. Invention in its strictest sense, it is true, he had not; but, on the other hand, he had the most consummate skill in employing what he found before him, in ordering it, and shadowing it forth. His roguish turns, his gift of mimicry; his biting wit, which at least one day weekly he might use with entire freedom, even against his benefactors, — made him precious, or rather indispensable, to the whole society.

Yet his restless mind soon drove him from this favourable scene to other quarters of his country, where other means of instruction awaited him. He came into the polished, but also barren, part of Germany, where, in worshipping the good and the beautiful, there is indeed no want of truth, but frequently a grievous want of spirit. His masks would here do nothing for him: he had now to aim at working on the heart and mind. For short periods, he attached himself to small or to extensive companies of actors, and marked, on these occasions, what were the distinctive properties, both of the pieces and the players. The monotony which then reigned on the German theatre, the mawkish sound and cadence of their Alexandrines,

the flat and yet distorted dialogue, the shallowness and commonness of these undisguised preachers of morality, he was not long in comprehending, or in seizing, at the same time, what little there was that moved and pleased.

Not only single parts in the current pieces, but the pieces themselves, remained easily and wholly in his memory, and, along with them, the special tone of any player who had represented them with approbation. At length, in the course of his rambles, his money being altogether done, the project struck him of acting entire pieces by himself, especially in villages and noblemen's houses, and thus in all places making sure at least of entertainment and lodging. In any tavern, any room, or any garden, he would accordingly at once set up his theatre: with a roguish seriousness and a show of enthusiasm, he would contrive to gain the imaginations of his audience, to deceive their senses, and before their eyes to make an old press into a tower, or a fan into a dagger. His youthful warmth supplied the place of deep feeling: his vehemence seemed strength, and his flattery tenderness. Such of the spectators as already knew a theatre, he put in mind of all that they had seen and heard: in the rest he awakened a presentiment of something wonderful, and a wish to be more acquainted with it. What produced an effect in one place he did not fail to repeat in others; and his mind overflowed with a wicked pleasure when, by the same means, on the spur of the moment, he could make gulls of all the world.

His spirit was lively, brisk, and unimpeded: by frequently repeating parts and pieces, he improved very fast. Erelong he could recite and play with more conformity to the sense than the models whom he had at first imitated. Proceeding thus, he arrived by degrees at playing naturally; though he did not cease to feign. He seemed transported, yet he lay in wait

for the effect; and his greatest pride was in moving, by successive touches, the passions of men. The mad trade he drove did itself soon force him to proceed with a certain moderation; and thus, partly by constraint, partly by instinct, he learned the art of which so few players seemed to have a notion, — the art of being frugal in the use of voice and gestures.

Thus did he contrive to tame, and to inspire with interest for him, even rude and unfriendly men. Being always contented with food and shelter; thankfully accepting presents of any kind as readily as money, which latter, when he reckoned that he had enough of it, he frequently declined, — he became a general favourite, was sent about from one to another with recommendatory letters; and thus he wandered many a day from castle to castle, exciting much festivity, enjoying much, and meeting in his travels with the most agreeable and curious adventures.

With such inward coldness of temper, he could not properly be said to love any one; with such clearness of vision, he could respect no one; in fact, he never looked beyond the external peculiarities of men; and he merely carried their characters in his mimical collection. Yet withal, his selfishness was keenly wounded if he did not please every one and call forth universal applause. How this might be attained, he had studied in the course of time so accurately, and so sharpened his sense of the matter, that not only on the stage, but also in common life, he no longer could do otherwise than flatter and deceive. And thus did his disposition, his talent, and his way of life, work reciprocally on each other, till by this means he had imperceptibly been formed into a perfect actor. Nay, by a mode of action and reaction, which is quite natural, though it seems paradoxical, his recitation, declamation, and gesture improved, by critical discernment and practice, to a high degree of truth, ease,

and frankness; while, in his life and intercourse with men, he seemed to grow continually more secret, artful, or even hypocritical and constrained.

Of his fortunes and adventures we perhaps shall speak in another place: it is enough to remark at present, that in later times, when he had become a man of circumstance, in possession of a distinct reputation, and of a very good, though not entirely secure, employment and rank, he was wont, in conversation, partly in the way of irony, partly of mockery, in a delicate style, to act the sophist, and thus to destroy almost all serious discussion. This kind of speech he seemed peculiarly fond of using toward Wilhelm, particularly when the latter took a fancy, as often happened, for introducing any of his general and theoretical disquisitions. Yet still they liked well to be together: with such different modes of thinking, the conversation could not fail to be lively. Wilhelm always wished to deduce everything from abstract ideas which he had arrived at: he wanted to have art viewed in all its connections as a whole. He wanted to promulgate and fix down universal laws; to settle what was right, beautiful, and good: in short, he treated all things in a serious manner. Serlo, on the other hand, took up the matter very lightly: never answering directly to any question, he would contrive, by some anecdote or laughable turn, to give the finest and most satisfactory illustrations, and thus to instruct his audience while he made them merry.

"He was sent to make them rest"

Photogravure after the painting by W. Friedrich

" He was wont to make them read "

Photogravure after the painting by W. Friedrich

CHAPTER XIX.

WHILE our friend was in this way living very happily, Melina and the rest were in quite a different case. Wilhelm they haunted like evil spirits; and not only by their presence, but frequently by rueful faces and bitter words, they caused him many a sorry moment. Serlo had not admitted them to the most trifling part, far less held out to them any hope of a permanent engagement; and yet he had contrived, by degrees, to get acquainted with the capabilities of every one of them. Whenever any actors were assembled in leisure hours about him, he was wont to make them read, and frequently to read along with them. On such occasions he took plays which were by and by to be acted, which for a long time had remained unacted; and generally by portions. In like manner, after any first representation, he caused such passages to be repeated as he had anything to say upon: by which means he sharpened the discernment of his actors, and strengthened their certainty of hitting the proper point. And as a person of slender but correct understanding may produce more agreeable effect on others than a perplexed and unpurified genius, he would frequently exalt men of mediocre talents, by the clear views which he imperceptibly afforded them, to a wonderful extent of power. Nor was it an unimportant item in his scheme, that he likewise had poems read before him in their meetings; for by these he nourished in his people the feeling of that charm which a well-pronounced rhythm is calculated to awaken in the soul: whereas, in other companies,

those prose compositions were already getting introduced for which any tyro was adequate.

On occasions such as these, he had contrived to make himself acquainted with the new-come players: he had decided what they were, and what they might be, and silently made up his mind to take advantage of their talents, in a revolution which was now threatening his own company. For awhile he let the matter rest; declined every one of Wilhelm's intercessions for his comrades, with a shrug of the shoulders; till at last he saw his time, and altogether unexpectedly made the proposal to our friend, "that he himself should come upon the stage; that, on this condition, the others, too, might be admitted."

"These people must not be so useless as you formerly described them," answered Wilhelm, "if they can now be all received at once; and I suppose their talents would remain the same without me as with me."

Under seal of secrecy, Serlo hereupon explained his situation, — how his first actor was giving hints about a rise of salary at the renewal of their contract; how he himself did not incline conceding this, the rather as the individual in question was no longer in such favour with the public: how, if he dismissed him, a whole train would follow; whereby, it was true, his company would lose some good, but likewise some indifferent, actors. He then showed Wilhelm what he hoped to gain in him, in Laertes, Old Boisterous, and even Frau Melina. Nay, he promised to procure for the silly Pedant himself, in the character of Jew, minister, but chiefly of villain, a decided approbation.

Wilhelm faltered; the proposal fluttered him; he knew not what to say. That he might say something, he rejoined, with a deep-drawn breath, "You speak very graciously about the good you find and hope to find in us; but how is it with our weak points, which certainly have not escaped your penetration?"

"These," said Serlo, "by diligence, practice, and reflection, we shall soon make strong points. Though you are yet but freshmen and bunglers, there is not one among you that does not warrant expectation more or less: for, so far as I can judge, no stick, properly so called, is to be met with in the company; and your stick is the only person that can never be improved, never bent or guided, whether it be self-conceit, stupidity, or hypochondria, that renders him unpliant."

The manager next stated, in a few words, the terms he meant to offer: requested Wilhelm to determine soon, and left him in no small perplexity.

In the marvellous composition of those travels, which he had at first engaged with, as it were, in jest, and was now carrying on in conjunction with Laertes, his mind had by degrees grown more attentive to the circumstances and the every-day life of the actual world than it was wont. He now first understood the object of his father in so earnestly recommending him to keep a journal. He now, for the first time, felt how pleasant and how useful it might be to become participator in so many trades and requisitions, and to take a hand in diffusing activity and life into the deepest nooks of the mountains and forests of Europe. The busy trading town in which he was; the unrest of Laertes, who dragged him about to examine everything, — afforded him the most impressive image of a mighty centre, from which everything was flowing out, to which everything was coming back; and it was the first time that his spirit, in contemplating this species of activity, had really felt delight. At such a juncture Serlo's offer had been made him; had again awakened his desires, his tendencies, his faith in a natural talent, and again brought into mind his solemn obligation to his helpless comrades.

"Here standest thou once more," said he within himself, "at the Parting of the Ways, between the two

women who appeared before thee in thy youth. The one no longer looks so pitiful as then, nor does the other look so glorious. To obey the one, or to obey the other, thou art not without a kind of inward calling: outward reasons are on both sides strong enough, and to decide appears to thee impossible. Thou wishest some preponderancy from without would fix thy choice; and yet, if thou consider well, it is external circumstances only that inspire thee with a wish to trade, to gather, to possess; whilst it is thy inmost want that has created, that has nourished, the desire still further to unfold and perfect what endowments soever for the beautiful and good, be they mental or bodily, may lie within thee. And ought I not to honour Fate, which, without furtherance of mine, has led me hither to the goal of all my wishes? Has not all that I, in old times, meditated and forecast, now happened accidentally, and without my coöperation? Singular enough! We seem to be so intimate with nothing as we are with our own wishes and hopes, which have long been kept and cherished in our hearts; yet when they meet us, when they, as it were, press forward to us, then we know them not, then we recoil from them. All that, since the hapless night which severed me from Mariana, I have but allowed myself to dream, now stands before me, entreating my acceptance. Hither I intended to escape by flight; hither I am softly guided; with Serlo I meant to seek a place; he now seeks me, and offers me conditions, which, as a beginner, I could not have looked for. Was it, then, mere love to Mariana that bound me to the stage? Or love to art that bound me to her? Was that prospect, that outlet, which the theatre presented me, nothing but the project of a restless, disorderly, and disobedient boy, wishing to lead a life which the customs of the civic world would not admit of? Or was all this different, worthier, purer? If so, what moved thee to alter the persuasions of that

period? Hast thou not hitherto, even without knowing it, pursued thy plan? Is not the concluding step still further to be justified, now that no side-purposes combine with it; now that in making it thou mayest fulfil a solemn promise, and nobly free thyself from a heavy debt?"

All that could affect his heart and his imagination was now moving, and conflicting in the liveliest strife within him. The thought that he might retain Mignon, that he should not need to put away the harper, was not an inconsiderable item, in the balance, which, however, had not ceased to waver to the one and to the other side, when he went, as he was wont, to see his friend Aurelia.

CHAPTER XX.

SHE was lying on the sofa: she seemed quiet. "Do you think you will be fit to act to-morrow?" he inquired. "Oh, yes!" cried she with vivacity: "you know there is nothing to prevent me. If I but knew a way," continued she, "to rid myself of those applauses! The people mean it well, but they will kill me. Last night I thought my very heart would break! Once, when I used to please myself, I could endure this gladly: when I had studied long, and well prepared myself, it gave me joy to hear the sound, 'It has succeeded!' pealing back to me from every corner. But now I speak not what I like, nor as I like; I am swept along, I get confused, I scarce know what I do; and the impression I make is far deeper. The applause grows louder; and I think, Did you but know what charms you! these dark, vague, vehement tones of passion move you, force you to admire; and you feel not that they are the cries of agony, wrung from the miserable being whom you praise.

"I learned my part this morning: just now I have been repeating it and trying it. I am tired, broken down; and to-morrow I must do the same. To-morrow evening is the play. Thus do I drag myself to and fro: it is wearisome to rise, it is wearisome to go to bed. All moves within me in an everlasting circle. Then come their dreary consolations, and present themselves before me; and I cast them out, and execrate them. I will not surrender, not surrender to necessity: why should that be necessary which crushes me to the dust? Might it not be otherwise? I am paying the

penalty of being born a German: it is the nature of the Germans, that they bear heavily on everything, that everything bears heavily on them."

"O my friend!" cried Wilhelm, "could you cease to whet the dagger wherewith you are ever wounding me! Does nothing, then, remain for you? Are your youth, your form, your health, your talents, nothing? Having lost one blessing, without blame of yours, must you throw all the others after it? Is that also necessary?"

She was silent for a few moments, and then burst forth, "I know well, it is a waste of time, nothing but a waste of time, this love! What might not, should not, I have done? And now it is all vanished into air. I am a poor, wretched, lovelorn creature, — lovelorn, that is all! Oh, have compassion on me! God knows I am poor and wretched!"

She sank in thought: then, after a brief pause, she exclaimed with violence, "You are accustomed to have all things fly into your arms. No: you cannot feel, no man is qualified to feel, the worth of a woman that can reverence herself. By all the holy angels, by all the images of blessedness, which a pure and kindly heart creates, there is not anything more heavenly than the soul of a woman giving herself to the man she loves!

"We are cold, proud, high, clear-sighted, wise, while we deserve the name of women; and all these qualities we lay down at your feet, the instant that we love, that we hope to excite a return of love. Oh, how have I cast away my whole existence wittingly and willingly! But now will I despair, purposely despair. There is no drop of blood within me but shall suffer, no fibre that I will not punish. Smile, I pray you; laugh at this theatrical display of passion."

Wilhelm was far enough from any tendency to laugh. This horrible, half-natural, half-factitious condition of his friend afflicted him but too deeply. He sympathised in the tortures of that racking misery: his

thoughts were wandering in painful perplexities, his blood was in a feverish tumult.

She had risen, and was walking up and down the room. "I see before me," she exclaimed, "all manner of reasons why I should not love him. I know he is not worthy of it; I turn my mind aside, this way and that: I seize upon whatever business I can find. At one time I take up a part, though I have not to play it; at another, I begin to practise old ones, though I know them through and through; I practise them more diligently, more minutely,—I toil and toil at them. My friend, my confidant, what a horrid task is it to tear away one's thoughts from oneself! My reason suffers, my brain is racked and strained: to save myself from madness, I again admit the feeling that I love him. Yes, I love him, I love him!" cried she, with a shower of tears: "I love him, I shall die loving him!"

He took her by the hand, and entreated her in the most earnest manner not to waste herself in such self-torments. "Oh! it seems hard," said he, "that not only so much that is impossible should be denied us, but so much also that is possible! It was not your lot to meet with a faithful heart that would have formed your perfect happiness. It was mine to fix the welfare of my life upon a hapless creature, whom, by the weight of my fidelity, I drew to the bottom like a reed, perhaps even broke in pieces!"

He had told Aurelia of his intercourse with Mariana, and could therefore now refer to it. She looked him intently in the face, and asked, "Can you say that you never yet betrayed a woman, that you never tried with thoughtless gallantry, with false asseverations, with cajoling oaths, to wheedle favour from her?"

"I can!" said Wilhelm, "and indeed without much vanity: my life has been so simple and sequestered, I have had but few enticements to attempt such things. And what a warning, my beautiful, my noble, friend, is

this melancholy state in which I see you! Accept of me a vow, which is suited to my heart; which, under the emotion you have caused me, has settled into words and shape, and will be hallowed by the hour in which I utter it. Each transitory inclination I will study to withstand, and even the most earnest I will keep within my bosom: no woman shall receive an acknowledgment of love from my lips to whom I cannot consecrate my life!"

She looked at him with a wild indifference, and drew back some steps as he offered her his hand. "'Tis of no moment!" cried she: "so many women's tears, more or fewer; the ocean will not swell by reason of them. And yet," continued she, "among thousands, one woman saved; that still is something; among thousands, one honest man discovered; this is not to be refused. Do you know, then, what you promise?"

"I know it," answered Wilhelm, with a smile, and holding out his hand.

"I accept it, then," said she, and made a movement with her right hand, as if meaning to take hold of his; but instantly she darted it into her pocket, pulled out her dagger quick as lightning, and scored with the edge and point of it across his hand. He hastily drew it back, but the blood was already running down.

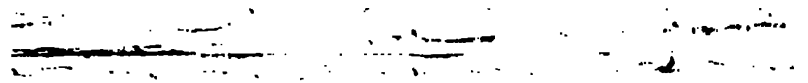
"One must mark you men rather sharply, if one would have you take heed," cried she, with a wild mirth, which soon passed into a quick assiduity. She took her handkerchief, and bound his hand with it to staunch the fast-flowing blood. "Forgive a half-crazed being," cried she, "and regret not these few drops of blood. I am appeased. I am again myself. On my knees will I crave your pardon: leave me the comfort of healing you."

She ran to her drawer, brought lint, with other apparatus, staunched the blood, and viewed the wound attentively. It went across the palm, close under the

thumb, dividing the life-line, and running toward the little finger. She bound it up in silence, with a significant, reflective look. He asked, once or twice, "Aurelia, how could you hurt your friend?"

"Hush!" replied she, laying her finger on her mouth: "Hush!"

END OF VOLUME I.



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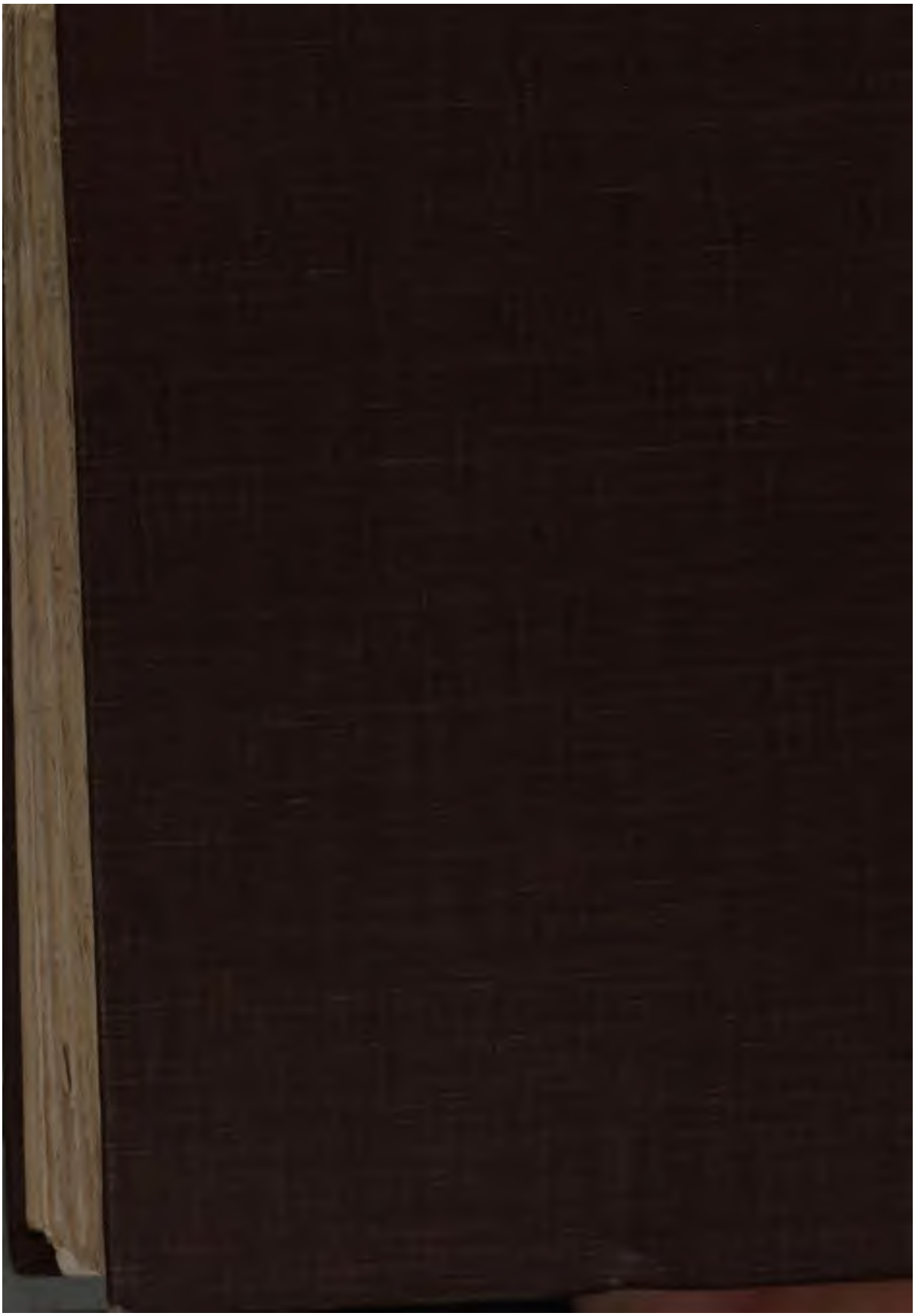
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